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The Centrality of Money and Machinery

I. Money

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IT IS impossible to overrate the importance of money and machinery in the development of civilization, which is to be interpreted as the sum of material or external values as distinguished from culture, which is the complex of interior or spiritual values. All civilization owes its existence to the introduction of money which took place in the seventh century before Christ; or, to be more correct, to the introduction of metal bars of fixed weight in place of bars of unfixed weight which the Greeks had hitherto used as a medium of exchange. It was a simple device from which no great change was expected. Yet the development which followed upon it was stupendous, since by facilitating exchange it led to differentiation of occupation, specialization in the crafts and arts, city life and foreign trade; it laid in fact the foundations of civilization. Modern civilization with all its conveniences and inconveniences, its comforts and luxuries, its simplifications and complexities follows the introduction of machinery. For these reasons money and machinery are to be regarded as the two central creative forces of civilization, the control of which is absolutely indispensable to any rational ordering of society. Before their advent culture existed, for culture is of the spirit, and is not finally dependent upon material accessories. Nevertheless the introduction of a fixed currency led to a great extension of culture; we cannot unfortunately say the same about machinery.

But there is another side to this question. Along with the undoubted advantages which came with a fixed currency, there came an evil unknown to primitive society – the economic problem. It created an economic revolution comparable only with that which followed the invention of the steam engine in more recent times. It completely undermined the patriarchal basis of the Mediterranean communities, while it gave rise to an economic individualism which rapidly divided society into two distinct and hostile classes – the prosperous landowners, merchants, and moneylenders on the one side, and the peasantry and debt-slaves on the other. "We can watch it in Greece, in Palestine, and in Italy, and see the temper of the sufferers reflected in Hesiod and Theognis, Amos and Hosea, and in the legends of early Rome."

Hitherto no one had ever thought of claiming private property in land, as was natural, since until currency made its apearance it could not be bought and sold; and nobody claims private property in things that can't be bought and sold. The man who tilled the soil thought of it as belonging to the family, to his ancestors and descendants as much as to himself. But within a couple of generations of the introduction of currency the peasantry everywhere began to find themselves in need of money; and they found it could be had by pledging their holdings as security for loans. After such transactions the land tended to pass into the hands of the merchant and money-lending class, for lean years have a way of running in cycles, and at such times the "haves" are able to take advantage of the necessities of the "have-nots". It was thus that private property came into existence in Greece and other Mediterranean communities. It was a sequel to the unregulated use of money. For this reason the centre of gravity of the economic problem is to be found in the problems of currency and price rather than property; and because of this it is desirable to get the profiteer under control by the fixation of prices before attempting a redistribution of property, since so long as men are free to manipulate exchange, property will find its way back into the hands of the money-lenders, unless of course property laws should be enacted in order to prevent any such thing happening.

The reason for the developments which followed the introduction of a fixed currency are not far to seek. So long as trade was carried on by barter a boundary was put to the development of trade, because in such circumstances people would only exchange for personal use; exchange would only be possible when each party possessed something which the other required. But once a fixed currency is introduced this limitation disappears; trade develops, and there comes into existence a class of men who buy and sell entirely for the purpose of gain. These men, the merchants and middlemen, become specialists in finance. They know better than the peasantry the market value of things, and so find little difficulty in taking advantage of them. It is the same story wherever prices are determined by the higgling of the market and men are at liberty to speculate in exchange: the distributor enslaves the producer. It happened in Greece, it happened in Rome, and it has happened everywhere in the modern world, for speculation in exchange brings the same evils in its train.

Though the Greeks thought a great deal about "money-breeding", as they called the problem of money, it eluded the efforts of their lawgivers and statesmen to find a solution, and in the end its unsolved problem broke up Greek civilization, as at a later date it broke up that of Rome. For though Roman civilization was eventually overthrown by the barbarians, it would not have been had it not been corrupted within by the growth of capitalism (itself a consequence of an unregulated money and price system) which disintegrated the social fabric, undermining the old virtues of courage and sacrifice which vanished before the growth of luxury, sensuality, and pessimism which capitalism encouraged. Society had to wait until the Middle Ages before a solution was forthcoming, when it was provided by the Guilds which solved the problem in the light of the teachings of Christianity by restricting money to its legitimate use as a common measure of value. Owing to the fact that the Guilds came into existence as the spontaneous and instinctive creations of the people, however, their significance was overlooked by mediaeval political and economic thinkers, who, if orthodox, confined their speculations to the range of issues covered by the Civil and Canon laws, and, if revolutionary, to the issues raised by the Law of Nature, in neither of which Guilds found a place. Another reason was that the mediaevalists were so obsessed by the problem of usury as to overlook its relation to the problem of price. This blindness of mediaeval thinkers to the significance of the Guilds is one of the great tragedies of history, for as a consequence the potentialities of the great economic discovery of the Guilds was lost to the world. Usury and capitalism triumphed because the Church looked everywhere for a solution except to the Guilds which stood at its door.

II

Though the Church fail~~ed in~~ its efforts to suppress usury or the taking of interest – for the Church at first refused to distinguish between them – yet the instinct which led the Church to make the attempt was perfectly sound, for experience proves that low rates, which we call interest, are just as inimical to the life of society as high rates which we call usury, the only difference between them being that the former operates more slowly. But in the end it is the same, as is apparent to anyone who reflects on the famous arithmetical calculation that a half-penny put out to five per cent compound interest would by now amount to an octillion – an amount in bullion which, as incredible as it may sound, would occupy a space equal to several gold globes as large as the earth. It is only necessary to make our acquaintance with this fact to realize that in assuming money is never so usefully employed as when it is used for the purpose of making more money, finance is committed to the suicidal assumption that there is no limit to the possibilities of compound interest. In consequence, it invested and reinvested its surplus wealth in new productive enterprises and loaded industry with an ever-increasing burden of debt. The effort to provide dividends on the inflated capital and the policy of indefinite industrial expansion it involved has brought finance into collision on the one hand with labour and on the other with foreign nations whose financiers and industrialists pursue the same object.

Thus usury – or shall we call the process by the Greek name money-breeding as being subject to less equivocation – leads to class and international warfare; finally it leads to a complete paralysis of the whole economic system, since when the centralization of wealth proceeds beyond the point at which the rich can spend it on consumption goods demand is undermined, because effective demand depends upon a wide distribution of wealth and purchasing power. And with the undermining of demand there comes into existence large and insoluble unemployed problems as we, like the Romans, have found out. Other agencies have been at work to promote the same end. In Rome there was slavery which displaced the free labour; in the modern world there is machinery which achieves a similar displacement. But apart from them, money-breeding by concentrating purchasing power in the hands of a few can be relied upon to create unemployment. Shall we say that nations which take to money-breeding perish by money-breeding?

It will not be necessary for me to enlarge further upon the evils of money-breeding since nowadays the facts are admitted. But wide differences of opinion exist as to the way out. One reason for this is that in the modern world the problem of money is complicated by the problem of machinery, and most people unfortunately do their thinking in watertight compartments, reasoning about money very much as if machinery did not exist, or introducing it only as an afterthought. Another reason is that currency reformers are accustomed to approach the problem of money entirely from the viewpoint of banking. They envisage it entirely as a matter of technics and seek a solution in the terms of money as a separate and detached issue; for even when they do recognize that the question has a moral aspect they are accustomed to treat it as they treat machinery – excluding it from their premises and introducing it into their conclusions – a method of reasoning that is responsible for many popular fallacies. Yet though currency reformers today err in approaching the problem of money as an entirely technical one, mediaeval thinkers were guilty of the very opposite error, treating it as if it were entirely a moral one, and as a consequence got themselves entangled in the end of a problem of which they did not know the beginning, never having seen the problem of money as a whole.

They saw that the problem of money had two aspects, which they identified as the problem of *usury*, or the relation of money to persons, and the problem of *price*, or the relation of money to things; but they never related these two problems to each other or treated them as two aspects of the same problem. They approached them as separate problems without a common economic denominator, though they recognized a common moral one. Yet while the mediaevalists recognized two problems, nearly the whole of their thought and inquiry was directed towards finding a solution of the problem of usury as a separate issue; no doubt because it was the aspect that forced itself upon their attention. Experience proved that the problem of usury would not yield to a purely moral approach. For three centuries they discussed it, but to the end it evaded them. In principle, all were against usury. But public convenience demanded that exception be made in certain cases, as in that of travelers who would have to carry large sums of money about with them which increased the danger of robbery; the farmer without reserves who needed money to carry him over a bad season, and the tradesman to enable him to hold on when work ran short; and there was the question of risk involved in a loan. To all such difficult and perplexing questions they sought solutions, but none was forthcoming. Exception was added to exception, until the Reformation brought a breach with mediaeval doctrine. At first the reformers were more uncompromising in their condemnation of usury than the Church. But under the auspices of the Reformation the commercial class became powerful, and when that happened the idea was promoted that the great mistake was to have attempted the suppression of usury at all. The right policy was to stop meddling and leave the problem to settle itself, on the assumption that if there were no interference the rate of interest would fall and the evils associated with usury would automatically disappear. We are sadder and wiser today.

The underlying cause of the failure of the mediaeval church to suppress usury was that it overlooked the fact that usury presents not only a problem of morals but a problem of organization. In attempting therefore to suppress it without at the same time making public provision for loans of money to those who required them it attempted the impossible; for, as we have seen, the function the usurer performed was often a public one, even if he did abuse his function. And this conclusion the Church eventually came to accept, as is illustrated by the fact that in the sixteenth century the Franciscans founded the *montes pietatis* or lending houses, which advanced loans to poor people. But at the best such establishments are makeshifts. It is safe to say that if in the Middle Ages the Guilds had been co-extensive with society instead of being confined to the towns the problem of usury would never have arisen. For as the Guilds were, among other things, centres of mutual aid, making provision for their members in times of sickness and adversity, little if any room would have remained for the depredations of the usurer and what little did remain could doubtless easily have been dealt with. Yet this most obvious solution of the problem of usury never occurred to the mediaevals in spite of the fact that Guilds existed in the towns. It never occurred to them that all they had to do was to organize Guilds in rural areas and usury would be no more. For the problem of usury in the Middle Ages was essentially a rural one; it did not exist in the towns.

III

The organization of Guilds is the key to the problem of money; for though the problem will not yield to a purely moral or a purely technical approach, it will yield to the Guild approach which is both moral and technical. The Guild principle is a very simple one, so simple that one wonders however it came to be overlooked. Currency, or in other words money, is a medium of exchange; the problem is how to restrict it to its legitimate use as *a common measure of value.* So long as money is fairly and honourably used to facilitate exchange by giving value for value, so long in fact as it is merely used as a token for the exchange of goods, it will remain in a close and definite relationship with the real values it is supposed to represent, and a practical economic equality will obtain between the individual members of society, which will remain in a healthy condition; for it will be free from those alternating periods of boom and depression in trade that are the inevitable corollary of speculation in prices. Unfortunately, such a desideration does not follow from the unrestricted freedom of exchange; that is, by allowing prices to be determined by the higgling of the market; because under such conditions there is no equality of bargaining power. And there are so many people who have no intention of using money as a common measure of value, but are determined to use it for the purpose of making more money. All the problems of currency that so often lead people to believe in the existence of a kind of economic witchcraft are traceable to this anti-social motive leading directly to the creation of the problem of riches and poverty, which is a by-product of this abuse of exchange. For this evil there is finally but one remedy: to fix the price of everything, and to fix it at a just level – to institute fixed and just prices and wages, the former of which in England in these days we call

Standard Prices. For only when all prices are so fixed will there be no room for the speculator. There will be nothing left to speculate in. Money-breeding will cease.

But if all prices are to be fixed it will be necessary to organize agriculture and industry under a system of Guilds, for by no other means could the principle of fixed prices be given a universal application. It is possible by means of bureaucracy to fix the prices of a few things, of the staples of industry, but not of everything. A natural limit is put to the successful application of the principle of bureaucracy, because as it extends the area of its activities, it accumulates red tape which ends in strangling it. Moreover bureaucracies are unpopular. This arises from the fact that as bureaucracy is a system of control from without, it can only enforce obedience by means of inspectors; and nobody loves being inspected, strange as it may sound to the Fabian-minded. And it is costly and inefficient.

With Guilds it is different. Being a system of control from within, they not only can govern without inspectors, but because they have the co-operation and goodwill of those engaged in industry they are not costly and can give effective application to the principle of Standard Prices to every item of production and exchange. It is my contention that the establishment of Standard Prices and the control of machinery should be the primary aim of reform activities, because upon these two issues everything else turns. All other issues, such as whether members of the Guilds should be organized to produce co-operatively, have small workshops of their own, or work as assistants to others, are matters of personal preference and are of secondary importance. They would tend to straighten themselves out as machinery was controlled and prices and wages fixed at a just level. Further if Guilds were established they could supply any capital that was required for the financing of industry from their own resources, and so emancipate industry from its thraldom to banks. The establishment of Guilds would render banks redundant. Banking and capitalism will never yield to a frontal attack. But there is no reason why their position should not be gradually undermined.

IV

Under the New Deal the first steps in this direction were taken, many industries having availed themselves of governmental assistance to fix prices. But experience proves it to be only possible to fix prices in industries which produce for the home market, while in agriculture there is a further complication arising from the fact that the regulation of the volume of production which is so essential if prices are to be fixed is not so easy. If an industrialist plans to produce a thousand automobiles he produces a thousand, neither more nor less. But there is no such thing as planning to produce a thousand quarters of wheat. All the farmer can do is to sow so many acres; the actual yield depends on the weather. It may be a thousand, fifteen hundred, or five hundred quarters. There is no knowing beforehand exactly what will be the yield. This fact differentiates agricultural from industrial economics. And because of it a precedent condition of introducing fixed and just prices into agriculture is to find a means of dealing with this problem. In a country like England which imports most of its food and which, if it produced all the food it could, would yet not be perplexed by a surplus, this problem is easily manageable, for the volume of food on the market can easily be regulated by the control of imports. But in a country like the United States, which can produce more than it can consume, it is different; and Mr. Secretary Wallace and his colleagues are to be congratulated on having found the means of handling this most difficult and perplexing problem, for to solve it is to solve one of the key problems of social reconstruction.

But as I have already suggested, a fixed price is not necessarily a just price, and unless it is just it cannot be claimed to subserve the purposes of social reconstruction; for the consumer has rights as much as the producer and his interests should be protected. For this reason it is not sufficient merely to empower trades to fix prices for their production. On the contrary, if such price-fixing is not to degenerate into legalized profiteering the government must have the right to examine books and records to see that the public are not being defrauded. Indeed on no other terms should any trade or business be given the privilege of fixing prices; for privileges are indefensible unless they are balanced by responsibilities, and those who repudiate responsibilities have no right to ask for privileges. But to insist that those who ask for privileges shall accept responsibilities is to break with tradition; for in the modern world governments have been accustomed to give industries the protection of tariffs without demanding from them any corresponding responsibilities, and for that reason until this question has been publicly agitated no President could make such a demand.

V

In his book *New Frontiers* Mr. Wallace tells us that this question is interesting farmers and consumers who are concerned to know "just what conditions justify government in permitting business to substitute group price-fixing for competitive price-fixing". So that it looks as if the New Deal may well lead the way to restoring the mediaeval principle of reciprocal rights and duties. Meanwhile the situation appears to be full of dangers. In this connection Mr. Wallace writes:

> I am convinced that the New Deal so gallantly started by President Roosevelt in March 1933 will eventually fail unless sometime during the next four years at least five thousand communities are fundamentally permeated with the spirit of the new pioneers not only in a sentimental, but also in a hard-boiled hard-thinking way. They must not only mean well in their hearts, but they must understand with their minds, the adjustments which must be made in our agriculture, our industry, and our monetary system. They must have so sound a grasp on these fundamentals, that the old dealers, with their short-sighted eyes firmly fixed on short-time profits, will not be able to distract them with continuous ballyhoo.
>
> To build new social machinery requires economic engineers. But the world will not be safe for these engineers, and will not give them the opportunity really to subdue the social wilderness until the new pioneers have set their outposts in at least five thousand communities.

It is not yet certain whether the New Deal will succeed.

It may fade as did the Raleigh expedition. It may grow into a sound and real resettlement of the land. Franklin Roosevelt is doing his part and so are many of his lieutenants, but the issue remains to be seen. Too many of us remain sodden with selfish, narrow concepts; too many of us want to see "normalcy" restored, in the old sense, and live again in plenty without facing facts. That cannot be. The world has changed. Such hopes must die.

But the danger lies not alone in the prejudices, selfishness, short-sightedness, and ignorance of the public; a far greater danger is to be found in an idea that finds a place in Mr. Wallace's book, because it happens to be an idea that has academic sanction. I refer to Mr. Wallace's belief in Free Trade and universal markets as the goal towards which policy should be directed – a belief which by no possible stretch of the imagination can be reconciled with the New Deal, for it is apparent that it is only possible to fix prices and regulate industry in proportion as a country is economically self-sufficient, because in so far as industries compete in foreign markets they must sell for what they can get. But this is a big issue. It raises the question of Protection and Free Trade which I shall have to leave for discussion in a future article.

(*To be concluded*)

Calling All Craftsmen

Albert Wood

There was a time when my heart was filled with envy for the boy born in a log cabin, and for the young immigrant stepping ashore penniless in a strange land, his meagre possessions slung lightly over his shoulder, bravely facing a new and unknown world armed only with his native courage and fortitude. Could I ever hope to reach such romantic heights of success as these chaps were traditionally destined to achieve? I, upon whom fate had conferred no mark of distinction beyond the fortuitous circumstance of being born on Bunker Hill?

I considered it something of a handicap not to have been reared in an environment which required rising at daybreak and milking six or eight cows before trotting dutifully off through the deep snow to the little red schoolhouse some three or four miles' walk down the road. As had my Pilgrim ancestors – according to frequent reminders. Indeed, it appeared that all the real topnotchers had somehow managed to acquire quite a satisfactory education with no more apparatus than a few torn books – borrowed, of course – and a hard bench in the chimney-corner illumined by glowing pine knots.

To be sure, such purely academic work was later supplemented by several years' apprenticeship in a law office or a publishing house or with a cabinetmaker or a surveyor, depending upon the inclination of the young man's talents. Depending, too, upon the difficulties encountered in persuading the prospective master that the youthful suppliant possessed sufficient native talent, get-up-and-get, perseverance, and general all-around mental and physical equipment to grapple with the forty-seven different varieties of drudgery which every apprentice was expected to perform, whether he sat behind a counting-house desk or stood before a carpenter's bench. And how speedily the vagrant cake-eater was supposed to fold up along the first strenuous stretch of that particular road to achievement!

From my classroom seat in the Bunker Hill grammar school – back in the days when the great majority of potential five-dollar-a-day men were still snuggling dreamily in their European cradles – the top of the nearby monument was always a visible and ever present stimulant; especially on those occasions when my own spirit seemed likely to succumb to the soft luxurious life and modern advantages I was supposed to enjoy as compared with the lot of my hardy, and often enviable, forebears.

At that time, my father was an "Architect, Builder, and Cabinet-Maker" – a combination that was still considered perfectly proper and respectable. Yet even then the handwriting was on the wall and the spectre of specialization was already beginning to cast a pretty definite shadow in the foreground. So when grammar school was done, came the day when I must needs choose which particular branch of my father's triangular profession I desired to follow, it being now fairly obvious that those boon companions – Architect, Builder, and Cabinet-Maker – were no longer destined to travel arm in arm as in the days of good

Samuel McIntyre and other of my boyhood heroes, father included.

Though father and I both believed it within my capacity to specialize in the planning and designing of buildings and that the status of architect was the social equal of any of the recognized and formal professions, father was still sufficiently practical and tradition-bound to insist upon my serving at least three years' apprenticeship in his shop before taking off for the chaste unfettered realm of pure architecture. Which proved to be a good break for me in the end because, from the very start of my later architectural apprenticeship, I enjoyed a modest salary – on the strength of my "practical" experience. Whereas in many instances architectural apprentices were required to pay two or three hundred dollars during their first year or so to help cover the expense of the space they occupied and a portion of the valuable time and supplies they consumed.

While still in my 'teens I stepped from father's shop to the drafting-room of a newly established Boston architectural office where, after a five-year apprenticeship and several years as a principal, I was eventually considered qualified for membership in the American Institute of Architects. An honour, by the way, which my family seemed to think topped off and made secure my truly professional status. . . . Ah, me!

I remember that during my first year in an architect's office I somehow lost a good portion of my respect for cabinet-makers and began speaking of father as an "Architect and Builder". The next change soon followed. Almost overnight, I began to have considerable doubt as to father's qualifications as an architect. It was becoming increasingly plain to me that one could not be an architect and builder both under the same hat. The two designations no longer travelled together in Beantown's best circles. So, since my father persisted in fooling around building salt-box houses, beautiful stairways, charming fireplace mantels and panelling and otherwise creating – often with his own hands and tools – choice bits of architectural detail with no more regard for academic procedure and guidance than a few crude pencil sketches drawn on a scrap of shiplap, I soon grew to discount his architectural capacity entirely, describing him thereafter merely as a "Builder".

In truth, as my own status rose through the successive stages of office boy, tracer, draftsman, etc., etc., to that of architect, father's status as steadily descended until it reached the lowest common designation, architecturally speaking. Father finally stood revealed as nothing more than a mere "Contractor"; at that time practically the lowest form of life with which a 10 A. M. to 4 P. M. architect ever by chance came into intimate contact.

Architecturally, America had now definitely abandoned the Tunnel-Entrance or Railroad Romanesque and the latest spring styles began to lean heavily toward proportions more Ionic. A few die-hards still contemplated with confidence the inscription, "In God We Trust", but the Savings Banks and Insurance Companies had publicized the Rainy Day bugaboo to such purpose that the majority were persuaded to place the bulk of their trust behind a stone colonnade of classic columns. The official proportions of said columns usually being guaranteed by no less an authority than Vignola himself.

Things began moving fairly fast now for the boys who had stepped up from cabinet-making and other mundane and uninspiring pursuits into the esoteric arena of undiluted architecture. The banks and insurance companies not only began to build well for themselves but they gave substantial encouragement to others. Indeed, it was a dull day when all five orders of architecture could not be found scampering joyously about the average drafting room. Fortunately, the type of architecture most frequently used in this commercial work had been thoroughly and meticulously standardized more than twenty centuries before – presumably against just such a day as this. Thus it was possible to work up the average commercial design practically overnight; and even the tricky monumental things could be fairly well licked over a weekend.

Occasionally, when some notable Old World composition seemed better adapted to clothe our naked structure than any garment we ourselves could devise, some time might be spent sending a draftsman overseas to measure up accurately the model we fancied. But on the whole, so long as a few Corinthian columns and a handful of egg-and-dart mouldings remained in the cupboard, architects managed to worry speedily along with comparatively few outright thefts from the Old Masters. My own record, toward the end of my apprenticeship, was two banks, a library, a schoolhouse, and a ten-story hotel – all in one week! Each design drawn in pencil with an occasional touch of color and all in sufficient detail for submission to the prospective clients. As banal as these designs undoubtedly were, each eventually became manifest in brick and stone with slight deviation from the lines of the original conception. What fun! And something like forty dollars a week to boot!

It must have been that week's work – while the Prix de Rome member of the firm was up to his ears struggling to make the design of the old Hotel de Ville serve for a modern City Hall – which won me a junior partnership. It also significantly marked the beginning of a business slump in our particular office and I began to find time to play around with cabinet-making again – merely as a pastime. Perhaps it was the timely publication of a couple of books of measured drawings and interiors of some fine old Colonial residential work (Architects, Builders and Cabinet-Makers invariably unknown) that inspired me. Anyway, for a time I considered chucking architecture altogether and devoting myself to the creation of fine furniture as a career. I fancied I might pick up and go on from where Skillin, Badlam, Shaw, Savery, Phyfe and some of the other masters left off. It must have been Spring, or love – or something. But fortunately for the shades of Phyfe et al, my firm opened a Pacific Coast office shortly after and I was sent out to manage it. Westward Ho!

During the decade that followed, it seemed that each one of Silas Ebenezer's offspring who had inherited a corner lot off the old farm began considering what particular type of million-dollar building would most fittingly commemorate the old man's genius for homesteading so accurately in the path of the fabulously rising land values along Main Street. It was indeed a neglected corner which could not boast of having at least two or three highly imaginative and monumental structures designed for its improvement. For the most favoured sites every architect in town had a file in which reposed a choice selection of grandiose projects, each guaranteed capable of producing not alone its own board and keep but also a tidy fifteen per cent annual interest on the also exceedingly-imaginative land value.

The process by which Ebenezer's heirs eventually caused the twenty-story Ebenezer Building to bloom where in old Silas's day only a couple of cows pastured was comparatively simple. If the estimated cost of the structure plus the liberally appraised value of the land produced a large enough total so that sixty per cent of it covered all the actual cash the transaction involved, the trick was done. Ebenezer, Jr. need not put up a red cent. Banks were quite content to trade the necessary cash for a mortgage which appeared safely secured by their forty per cent discount of the gross appraisal. I sometimes had an uncomfortable feeling that the mortgagors were actually assuming fully one hundred per cent of the risk – and even more in cases where a competitor's plans had been selected! But I attributed this more to my inherited instincts than to any substantial grasp on modern economic science. At any rate, the fees we enjoyed on this type of commercial work well covered the inevitable losses incurred on the many small residences, churches, and libraries we had the pleasure of designing.

Thus for some years I careered steadily ahead; my earnings never soaring to any lofty heights yet never dipping to any especially depressing depths. Along the way I skimmed a little unearned increment from a small real-estate venture or two, found a wife, and laid the foundation for both a small country estate and what, in this country, is considered a large family. My practice even survived the World War, during the greater part of which I had been occupied with the construction of one of the Army's notable base hospitals.

Surely the cycle from my Bunker Hill school days to the Armistice covered every segment of experience likely to befall me — or so I fondly imagined. Equipped in every way to deal successfully with the era of Peace and Plenty which the country now faced, I anticipated the future with zest.

I hadn't long to wait: for our financial nabobs, their brows still moist from the labour of cramming our securities vaults with the paper profits supposedly harvested from the lush years of destruction, now quickly and with undiminished energy turned their talents to the task of encouraging every form of constructive activity upon which could be loaded a forty-year handicap of interest-bearing coupons. The Land of the Pilgrims' Pride began moving skyward under a system mathematically certain eventually to transform it into a Social Workers' Paradise. And I had a front seat to witness the Boom-That-Ended-Booms.

In my profession we soon found we could grow two twenty-story structures on the spot where only one grew before. Mortgage-bond houses a-plenty were willing to put the Midas touch on any apartment house project backed up with a fifty-dollar water-colour perspective, while other financial agencies almost quarrelled over the privilege of financing Midtown's sky-piercing office buildings. On occasion, when especially hardheaded and far-sighted men of finance were encountered, promoters often found it good tactics to add an observation tower to their lofty plans. Scarcely a banker but had heard of the Eiffel Tower's amazing dividends – and this amusement feature doubtless had sufficient sales appeal in some instances to swing the whole deal. Be all this as it may . . . the truth is that presently we heard the lively metallic clatter of riveting-hammers where yesterday echoed the deathly tattoo of the machine-gun. That was something!

It was during this fabulous forty-story era I gradually began to realize that at my elbow stood a lively little group of bright-faced problems destined to influence my life and affairs more vitally than anything I had yet encountered. They were my five sons – the real substance behind all the foregoing effervescent preamble. These sons (born so close together that at one stage we had five children under seven years of age) had also been stretching steadily skyward through the years; the two oldest already having reached the age when I felt urged to take a more intimate and serious interest in their latent talents than ever before. Would the first become a crack designer and perhaps the second a skilful structural engineer? Could I from among the others some day hope to find a cagey specification-writer or a persuasive project promoter – or one with a flair for making advantageous social contacts?

Fortunately, I now enjoyed full proprietorship of my own architectural practice and in due course expected to man the key positions from among these five young hopefuls of my own. Such pleasantly selfish reflections were all more or less momentary since a new complication was rapidly casting its rosy glow across the family's economic horizon. "Suppose", cogitated my conscientious Pennsylvania Dutch wife, " – suppose our sons upon reaching maturity, find it quite unnecessary to worry about the problem of earning their own way in the world?" Shuddering shades of William Penn and Paul Revere!

Needless to say, the aforesaid rosy glow had no kinship with the faintly paternalistic aura of the fifty-million-candle-power N. Y. A. beacon which was to lighten the burden of youth in the year 1935. It was merely the hopeful little gleam of future economic independence generated by a demure pile of mortgage-bonds, common stocks, and other so-called securities which reposed mischievously in the family strong box, accumulated in the fatuous belief that man had somehow acquired the miraculous power of creation whereby even interest-on-interest could be made a thing of golden substance and reality.

"If our sons never work for their living, they'll never enjoy living," my good Frau would mutter every time I entrusted another baby bond to the strong box. And it is amazing how that trite phrase took root in my plebeian consciousness, rapidly growing into almost an obsession. Good heavens! I don't suppose if my ancestry could be traced clear back to Adam (or my wife's) you would find one single able-bodied male who hadn't worked for his living and so far as I know hadn't enjoyed living too. So . . . would I be the first to encourage a rupture in this glorious tradition? Indeed not I! Not while one drop of prerevolutionary blood coursed lonesomely through my veins. And being the long-haired type ever eager to set the world right and lacking backbone to resist a go at every problem that peeped into visibility, I set myself studiously to the task of sketching out some plan whereby the five sons would be immunized from the dangers of even a slight attack of inherited wealth. (That slight breeze, my friends, is merely the ghostly regiment of emaciated stocks and bonds that have chosen this opportune moment in our lecture to sneak feebly back to their lifeless vaults.)

The old-fashioned architectural habit of leaning on the wisdom of the past for inspiration eventually led to the conclusion that: (a) the five sons should be trained to work for a portion at least of their living; (b) the younger they began, the better; (c) preferably by means which would stimulate interest in and the practice of some phase of craftsmanship – on the theory that if you cut your own wood it will warm you twice. So, since guests were none too easily persuaded to spend a week-end where five boys, a couple of ponies, and an assortment of dogs were habitually on the loose, we determined to convert our small guest-house at the end of the orchard into an inexpensively equipped studio and workshop.

For the better part of the summer the workshop teemed with a confusion of boys, books, tools, arts-and-crafts magazines, wood, leather, clay, metal, materials for weaving; selected articles about famous craftsmen, craftsmanship, and the fine arts; paints, stains, and drawing equipment; also pictures by the score illustrating a wealth and variety of useful and beautiful treasures men all down the ages had contrived to produce with little more machinery than a good head and deft hands. Occasionally, by dint of much sleuthing and a measure of archaeologist's luck, the atelier of some craftsman might be located within the limits of a day's motor journey and the entire group would sally forth to enjoy and profit by a fascinating close-up of some particular phase of creative activity.

Curiously enough, from amid such chaos there emerged by early fall a fairly definite purpose. From the start, wood-carving and cabinet-making had the strongest appeal; and in the end the sons unanimously decided this path would lead them most happily toward their goal.

The output of the guest-house workshop during the next three years stepped steadily up from the production of artless pine painted end-tables and hanging bookshelves to more or less elaborately carved hardwood chests, desks, and dining-room groups. "Authentic copies" and "period reproductions" were taboo from the start. For better or worse, it was determined that everything produced should be endowed with some distinctive character of its own—a vital and most fortunate decision as later events were to prove.

The sons piled the first season's work on the pony cart and confidently peddled it from door to door among the residents of a nearby summer colony — a method of merchandising about as subtle as P. T. Barnum. But whether it was the wistful-eyed pony, the wicker cart, the salesmen, or the merchandise which had the most sales appeal scarcely mattered, for at this time everybody was in the grip of a buying epidemic and the end-tables and bookshelves found ready sale. Best of all, the profits were sufficient to cover many little luxuries previously purchased from the weekly allowance, now considerably reduced. Furthermore, the earned dollar was found to cover a lot more territory than any other kind of dollar ever had.

The beginning of the next season found the group of embryo Cellinis as eager and enthusiastic as the Old Barn Drama Guild that had set up shop on the other corner of the township. The eldest son had enrolled and spent the previous winter in a school of architecture, while the second son had devoted a good part of his last prep-school year to drawing and wood-carving. Both were now keen to scale new heights of design and craftsmanship. Even the younger members of the firm began discussing with animation the relative merits of double-ought and triple-ought sandpaper, and the technique of finishing teakwood.

Meanwhile, I had permitted my practice to settle into a highly specialized groove – my commissions frequently spotted a thousand miles apart. Thus it became increasingly advisable to have competent on-the-spot associates handle the bulk of routine drafting-room and supervisory details. This eliminated the need of maintaining any considerable staff in my own office; so, blessed with an efficient secretary, I frequently found myself able to spend several days at a time with the sons in what had now become a combined workshop and studio. The lure of the place was doubtless also much enhanced by the proximity of our own fine tennis court and the formation of a couple of well-matched teams from within our own ranks.

Naturally, as I spent more time with the sons and less time pursuing new architectural prospects, my income dwindled rapidly. Still I felt fairly secure and carefree financially. Besides, hadn't the sons offered to take me into partnership with them any time I felt inclined to settle down and do some real work for a living? So that summer during my spare time, and to prove they might hunt further and fare worse, I designed, carved, and fabricated a piece of furniture that knocked their eyes out. Anyhow, that's my impression and I'll do my best to retain it!

From the beginning there had certainly been a serious enough purpose behind the workshop activities yet everything had been done largely in a spirit of recreation and fun. In more ways than one it had been a fascinating experimental laboratory for both my wife and myself, inspired no doubt by the old-fashioned notion that sons should be given an opportunity and encouraged to acquire a substantial measure of that freedom, individualism, and independence our forefathers so jealously treasured and nurtured for us: a heritage which should continue to distinguish this land of ours from all the other nations of the world. This is probably a provincial and narrow Bunker Hill viewpoint and already well on the road to oblivion along with the Constitution and all the other revolutionary knick-knacks our fathers broke their backs to acquire.

However . . . during the workshop's third year, the sons still expected to make architecture their ultimate vocation, I believe, and craftsmanship merely their avocation. At any rate, that fall, the two eldest trotted off to the college of architecture, arm in arm.

We can now move swiftly toward the climax of our story, for the stupendous gilded bubble of credit-born-of-expectation which the nation had been so busily pumping up suddenly reached its elastic limit – and burst! And soap got in our eyes. And the staff I had fashioned during the fat years turned out to be little better than a broken reed. And like all the others I had to grope my way about as best I could.

In the months that followed, and though I felt sure I still had a reliable ace or two up my sleeve, fate seemed determined to stack the cards against me. "You would stretch your already thin talents from coast to coast," I ruefully reminded myself. "You would play around with sons and handicrafts and tennis while the good ship Lollipop dissolved under your feet!"

But pshaw! What a glorious, soul-satisfying time it had been! Suppose I had been overtaken by bankruptcy and faced such destitution as had not been known in the family for more than a generation? What if I did have nine adorable people to support? What if – at the last moment when there was yet a slight prospect of pulling through somehow – the bank had suddenly decided to fold up? Weren't we descendants of that fine rugged pioneer stock that just loved to grapple with adversity and disaster? Wasn't this the glorious opportunity we needed to show the world that despite all our advantages – social, educational, and natural – we were no less hardy and competent to deal with the hazards and disasters of life than our Mayflower forebears had been? What vital thing had we lost – save some vague profits symbolized by a few scraps of paper we had long since taken out of the strong box and deposited in the waste basket?

The day the eldest boys came home from college, forced out for lack of funds, was by far the gloomiest our family ever experienced. Our little country estate, for years the haven of all our hopes and joys, had passed into other hands – lock, stock, and barrel.

In the afternoon we walked silently out to the studio and workshop for a last goodbye look around. In one corner was a maple chair, soft brown, with exquisite hand-carved framing and a comfortable and inviting hand-woven seat; it sat there fairly sparkling with joy and inspiration. Why, bless your soul! not since Duncan Phyfe's day had a chair like that one been created. It was architecture – movable architecture! In another corner a teakwood chest, its smooth surface alive with the friendly lustre of fine hand-rubbed wood, bid us an understanding sympathetic welcome . . . and the gloom lifted a little. Then we fell to examining some low-relief carving still in the experimental stage, its technique rather suggestive of etching. Also some fragments of wood sculpture which fortunately we were permitted to salvage. The gloom lifted a little more.

"Fine craftsmanship . . . one thing that always survives and retains its value," I remarked, half to myself. "The truly civilized man cherishes every fragment he is fortunate enough to fall heir to – and builds his finest buildings in which to preserve and display them."

We began fingering over some pencil studies and scale drawings we had once made for a modern-style dower chest. The designs seemed refreshingly interesting. Modern in feeling yet no wise resembling the Boxy-Moderne which often merely accents the "stupidity of simplicity without form". Some one ventured an idea for the construction of the lid: not an especially brilliant idea in itself though it later led to a new and decided improvement in cabinet-making technique. Another suggested how an appropriate bit of carving might add charm. Within an hour the gloom had entirely lifted. And by sundown our hopes were running high before the brisk breeze of a novel and exceedingly unconventional idea.

My architectural practice was going to be deader than a dried mackerel and as unproductive as Sahara for some years to come. Anyone willing to face the facts could be quite certain of that. We were broke and at best could not hope to raise above a few hundred dollars cash. We lived in a community among friends where in many cases our family was soon going to be the object of well-merited pity. Already we had been obliged to relinquish several swanky club memberships and numerous other little social passports. To be sure, the largest manufacturer and wealthiest man in the state had been my client and friend and would most likely find some job for me and maybe a couple of the boys, if he knew my circumstances. Yet it could be but thinly disguised charity at best. By temperament none of us was the least industrially minded, in any mass-production sense. He knew that too, I suspected. But, suppose the five of us — counting the third and fourth sons, both of whom were nearing the end of their prep school days — suppose we five formed a little cabinet-makers' guild of our own? We'd set up shop on whatever humble basis circumstances might impose. Why couldn't we repair fine furniture; or refinish it; or replace handwoven cane or rush seats as it was done in the old days? Or do anything else of a similar nature, if we found it impossible to sell enough new work to keep busy from the start? Indeed we could! This then was the novel and unconventional purpose upon which we felt so strongly and enthusiastically urged to embark.

If the age had been over-mechanized, as the technocrats contended, certainly there could be no harm to society if we experimented along somewhat different lines. However, we decided we couldn't give our theories a satisfactory test in a community where I had been so prominently identified in a purely professional capacity. Something cautioned me it would be bad psychology. I don't know precisely why, but people never relish buying bread from a poor flour-dusted baker if he has once been their well-to-do, spic-and-span banker. Besides, if we five were going in for native craftsmanship, wouldn't it be better if we returned to the New England environment of our forefathers, where such work was more likely to be appreciated and understood? And where a really fresh and unprejudiced start could be made?

I'll confess the whole idea seems mighty hazardous, even ridiculous. But perhaps no more so than many another progressive departure from the regular routine of life. Except that instead of plunging ahead into the new, the untried, and the unknown, we were turning back to the old, the tried, and the known. Also, in a sense, the forgotten and the abandoned. There was also inherent in the plan a strong appeal to the romantic and the adventurous. It would be a great lark, really! For it appears that our family at heart are the carefree unstable sort of folk for whom this sort of thing always has an irresistible appeal. No matter how rough the road nor how great the labour or sacrifice involved, those distant horizons beckon us with all the lure of Ponce de Leon's mythical fountain of youth. The season of year was propitious – we were practically homeless anyway – so why not all pile into our big old touring car and – with a half-ton trailer attached to accommodate our luggage and what personal belongings and tools were left to us – get on our way? Such was the enthusiasm, the speed, and the efficiency of our co-operative efforts, that four days later we had already covered the first five hundred miles of our journey. And the Western plains witnessed the unusual spectacle of a dust-covered caravan of American pioneers headed East!

But it wasn't a very peppy outfit that pulled up in a congested corner of New England one evening a few days later. We'd sung ourselves out; the lark was gone. We'd reached the distant horizon and suddenly it rose up before us in all its naked, unromantic reality. A different, and frequently indifferent tourist camp every night – many days' consecutive diet of picnic food – the natural reactions – all had taken their toll.

We spent a chilly, drizzly night on the fringe of an industrial community in one of the shantiest, most depressing tourist camps imaginable. And suddenly the realization of how utterly homeless and transient we were filled us with nostalgic heeby-jeebies. Gypsying about the country is all very well if only somewhere in the land you have an established home to return to. But when there is no home, well. . . .

The urgent need of getting under a more or less permanent roof of our own, where we could revive our spirits and calmly review our prospects, was now vividly apparent. Providentially, the next morning dawned fair and warmer; and with rising courage we set out early for Fairlane some forty miles distant — a village I had visited once or twice in my youth and still remembered for its friendly old-fashioned charm. Fairlane, famed now as the centre of one of America's loveliest country home districts, would provide the environment and background most suitable for our proposed activities, so I confidently hoped. Also I knew my family would love the place if it hadn't changed too much.

In truth, we found in Fairlane a curious and interesting combination of the old and the new. What might be called "Lower Town" was, I imagine, practically unchanged from its heyday, somewhere back in the gay nineties. Upper Town, largely developed since the World War, bore the modern touch: the new theatre, the new stores, and the new residential sections wherein dwelt a delightful colony of professional and semi-professional people who could afford to make their homes a forty-minute train ride from the City.

Economically and otherwise, Lower Town was certainly meant for us. And when we found an ancient house (within sight of a quaint old mill built in 1692 and now doing splendid service as a tearoom) which we could buy for a trifling down payment and the balance like rent, we thought we had miraculously reached the rainbow's end. To be sure, there was a carload of weeds and climbing vines to be removed from the front yard and the front porch, and much scrubbing and glazing and painting to be done. Also the heating arrangements were far removed from the air-conditioned grandeur of Upper Town homes — and were likely to remain so for a time at least. But a fortnight's hard work wrought such a transformation in the place that it created something of a sensation in Lower Town, encouraging every property-owner within sight to peer hopefully behind the forty-year growth that concealed his own domicile. And raising valuations generally!

Both the arrangement of our property and the zoning regulations permitted the use of the lower floor for a studio and workshop, and within a month our "Five Sons" shingle was swinging in the breeze and the sons busily trotting from door to door advertising the establishment. The novelty of a family of five sons bearing a pronounceable New England name, soliciting chairs to mend, also caused a mild sensation. Yet, before the season was over, we had many an occasion to envy families with distinctly unpronounceable names who, with assets greatly exceeding our own, none the less enjoyed the generous bounty of organized relief. We frequently had to scratch hard to purchase seventy-five cents' worth of coal and for a year never could afford more than two dollars' worth at a time!

But were we not destined to carry on the torch of one-hundred-per-cent hardy Americanism? Would we relinquish our birthright so easily? Had not my grandfather, born not twelve miles distant, faced much more difficult days and survived — presumably by his own industry and fortitude? What highly organized, financially unlimited relief agencies had tempered the winter's winds and put famine to route in those days? Why, bless my soul, we were at worst so much better off that no comparison was possible!

So we reasoned and comforted ourselves when the going was particularly hard. And hard it frequently was — and is — make no mistake about that! Yet we managed to pull through the first year of "repairs and cabinet-making" as a self-sustaining institution. Beginning the second year (incidentally, the second New Deal year too) we built an addition to our premises, doubling the capacity of the workshop. And if there is any moral to be drawn at this time, it is simply that with all the publicity which even a small building-permit for an alteration received at that time, not one carpenter or plumber or electrician or building mechanic of any description came around asking for work. Though there were enough on the unemployed roll to rebuild all of Lower Town in one season.

Frequent scouting trips through neighbouring towns — visits to antique dealers and cabinet-makers — revealed an interesting state of affairs in the realm of craftsmanship. Antique dealers, generally speaking, were found a pathetically untrained class of white-collared junk dealers who, inheriting an old barn, a spinning wheel, and an attic full of great-grandfather's discarded bric-a-brac and what-nots, had been pretty busy demonstrating that life — for the commonplace — really only begins a century after forty.

The cabinet-makers were an equally odd lot. Seldom did we find one who actually had on display and bearing a price tag, one single original creation of his own heart and mind and hand. Certainly, they would reproduce or refinish or repair — anything. But of native design or craftsmanship, they possessed but slight knowledge. Samuel McIntyre? Oh, yes! That fellow running for sheriff in the next county. . . . Duncan Phyfe? Sure, they'd heard of him. A furniture maker . . . dead now . . . but his big factory down in New York — or somewhere — still carried on the business. . . . Yes, they had learned cabinet-making in the old country . . . never saw an American-born cabinet-maker that was any good. Anyhow, everything was machinery in this country.

We stopped to sympathize with one elderly chap the while he tinkered with the broken splat of one of those exquisite combinations of Colonial engineering and craftsmanship — a high comb-back Windsor chair. "Too much machinery these days," we observed, trying to lure him into some revealing declaration. "Take this chair now" — couldn't he make one as good, or better? And get fifteen or twenty dollars for it? Folk had to have chairs. And if they were comfortable and beautiful and he displayed one in his shop window with a reasonable price plainly marked on it? He didn't know . . . his was altogether repair work now . . . hadn't really ever made just a chair for sale in all his life! Furniture stores sold them so cheaply anyway — he often repaired them . . . poor workmanship too . . . not worth much . . . machine made!

Well, the sons and I repaired chairs too — nearly three hundred that first year. We also designed and made some: strong, comfortable, beautiful, we thought. We showed them around and offered them on trial at a sensible price. Again the going was awfully hard at first yet eventually they sold – and stayed sold. And sold others by example. We discovered we could even hope to make a modest living, producing nothing but chairs, had we been compelled to. But we didn't fancy such limitations. Besides, that was a job for Grand Rapids. They could do it as well and a whole lot cheaper than we. Of course Grand Rapids would make them in such quantities they'd soon flood the country and become commonplace and cheap, most likely. And in six months a new style would have to be designed and introduced, all at such terrific overhead expense that only by mass production could the design and advertising costs be distributed and reasonably absorbed.

That may be the vital economic difference between a craftsman's methods of working and the methods of big business. We will make and sell hundreds of our chairs – but sales will be spread over a generation of time and we'll likely not live long enough to feel the need of changing basic patterns. So with the other pieces we've designed and produced. That is why I am convinced that the thoroughly trained craftsman today faces his greatest opportunity. The sensible employment of machinery frees his hand for an increasing number of the fine thoughtful touches in design and craftsmanship which endow most of our personal treasures with half their charm and value.

Fear of the Machine Age, however, and mass production methods in general, is as childish and unwarranted as it was when the first power loom came into existence – so far as the trained craftsman is concerned. The steadily increasing success our work has enjoyed during the past two years demonstrates that, among other things.

Mass production in this day can create wealth faster than we know how to distribute it. More men can have more things than ever before. And the more things a man can possess, the more wealth he has, the more he cherishes and values and desires work of fine craftsmanship – the personalized output of the creative artisan. One does not need any special training to appreciate fine craftsmanship. Nearly everyone recognizes the real thing almost by natural instinct, which is often the surest guide. But one does need special training to produce fine works of craftsmanship. Perhaps a good many of us are soaring too far above our capacities. Perhaps, instead of aspiring to an executive desk and a national overlordship in some phase of the fine arts, we could profitably return to the workshop and with our own hands fashion some of the more simple conceptions which spring so readily from our fertile pencils.

At least it is one way of demonstrating whether a man honestly has the capacity for those larger problems he so persistently seeks to have entrusted to his care and placed under his dominion.

The Value of the Creative Faculty in Man

Eric Gill

WHAT is the nature of Man – "Quid est homo? . . . Constituisti eum super omnia opera manuum tuarum." In what is this superiority? "I have said you are gods." In what way are men as gods? What do we know of God? Credo in Deum . . . creatorem coeli et terrae. *Creatorem* – what does create mean? The Shorter Oxford Dictionary says: to bring into being; to cause to exist; to form out of nothing; to originate.

Now the existence of anything is dependent upon four causes. Take for example this table.

(1) There is something that makes tables tables and not candlesticks; this kind of thing, not another kind. But, further, as an individual thing: this particular table and not that; a table like this one and not like that one – what makes tables tables, and this particular table this particular shape is the *formal cause* and without that cause this table would not exist.

(2) It is made of *wood.* If there were not this piece of wood, *this* table would not exist. That is the *material cause.*

(3) It is *made.* Its makers used their knowledge and skill as carpenters or machine-minders . . . and they used saws and chisels and planes and the power of their bodies or of machines. That is the *efficient cause.*

(4) *Why* did they make this table? This table *does* something – it supports things. They had a purpose in view when they made it (if only to make money by selling it). Whatever purpose it was that caused them to make it, that is the *final cause*.

So the created thing has four causes of existence and there is first of all the creative imagination. To create: primarily, to "imagine", as we say, what does not otherwise exist. For to take material and manipulate it to a certain end, to take wood and saw it in order to make a table, results in nothing unless the image of the table to be made exists first in the creative imagination. This image is the formal cause (as existing in the maker's imagination, the extrinsic formal cause; as existing in the thing once made, the intrinsic formal cause).*

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* The reader must be careful to distinguish what is here called the imagination from the imagination or phantasia of the scholastics, the "sort of storehouse of sense-impressions" as St. Thomas calls it (I, 78, 4). This latter is a sensory faculty; its images are material images; its function is to take part as instrument of the mind, in the process of acquiring knowledge. But the human mind can do more than acquire knowledge. In a manner of speaking it chews up and digests its sense-impressions, and a new, hitherto non-existent "image" is created. So that when we say a man has "imagination" we mean not merely that he registers his sense-impressions but that he creates images; and when a child draws or a poet "makes", likeness to sensory appearance is the least important as well as the least obvious character of their productions. Now this creative "image" is not purely sensory; on the other hand, it is, as Maritain points out, not a purely intellectual form either, it concerns "not only the intellect but the imagination and sensibility of the artist . . . and for this reason cannot be expressed in concepts" (*Art et Scolastique*, p. 278). This special use of the intellect, imagination, and senses, then, is here called, in accordance with common English usage, "imagination".

Man is like God in respect of this creative imagination. For the creative imagination does not merely discover what already exists; its creates what does not already exist. Not to use the imagination is to be less than human. If the images it creates do not otherwise exist, then the agent or cause of their existence is responsible for their existence. And as the activity which produces them is an intellectual activity, to deprive people of it is to reduce them to a "subhuman condition of intellectual irresponsibility". That is the condition of men in our Industrialism. The factory "hand" as such is less than a man – he is simply a sentient part of the machinery. He is only a man when he is not working.

But you can begin a different way. *Quid est homo?* You can begin, like an experimental scientist, with the footrule and the microscope and the weighing machine and Co. By an act of faith you can affirm the self-existence of what you call "matter", and the real validity of your experiments. You can be a materialist, and worship power or energy instead of form. You can deny the formal and final causes, and accept only the efficient and material causes. You can affirm that there are no forms – only matter . . . no purposes or ends – only effects. This requires an act of faith greater than any made by Hindus or Christians. As H. G. Wells said: "By faith we disbelieve." But that is not so difficult in our Industrial civilization for that civilization is itself one in which both formal and final causes are denied. To the bee, the hive has no "form". To the bee, the question: "What's it all bloomin' well for?" has no meaning and no answer. But English Industrialism unlike that of Russia (*i.e.*, unlike that envisaged by the Communist Party) has not made the necessary "act of faith". It is hampered, marred, by the straggling, ill-nourished, but by no means dead remains of the civilization which preceded it. When Mr. Selfridge and Messrs. Vickers proclaim that England is a Christian country, their proclamation has the dregs of truth in it; for neither they nor their dehumanized employees have actually made the act of faith which true materialism demands.

The creative faculty is that one which is the mark of man – it is the one which makes him like God. God created man "in His own image". And the dynamic centre or core of the faculty of creation is the imagination. If you cannot imagine, then, whatever else you can do, you cannot create. But the word "imagination" (and the adjective "imaginative") necessitates a certain apology today. Just as the words "father" and "mother" become obscene words in the "Brave New World" – so the word "imagination" is, if not obscene, at least ridiculous today. And it carries with it a suggestion of vagueness and lack of discipline – of self-indulgence and softness. It suggests the opposite of "hard-boiled". If Tom Briggs the navvy or Bill Bones the 365th machine-minder in a boot factory show signs of imagination, they are more likely to get "the boot" than promotion.

"Where there is no vision the people perish." And in a sort of spiritual death men carry on as automatons, "hands", employees. . . . But as no means have yet been devised by which men and women can be doped and put on shelves during the hours when they are neither working nor sleeping (for human beings cannot sleep more than about eight hours a day or work more than ten or twelve, and so there are about four hours of what we call "leisure" to be provided for) so we have to cater for those hours during which, while neither working nor sleeping, they tend to break away from the automatic and let their imaginations "rip", imaginations entirely undisciplined and untrained because entirely unused. Then we talk about the arts and crafts. And the arts and crafts have become a sort of dope – the dope required to keep men and women entertained and quiet during their leisure hours. There are other dopes – the arts and crafts are only one kind – hiking, athletics, the cinema are other kinds.

Now one of the main springs of energy among animals and among human beings (for human beings are also animals) is the sexual appetite. A consequence of the sexual appetite is the increase and multiplication of species. There is no escape from this at present. Males and females we are, and we have an insatiable appetite for one another. But this appetite can be disciplined and the dammed up energy can be allowed to overflow into other spheres. Normally it overflows into the sphere of necessary work. There could never under any circumstances be full sexual satisfaction; by no arrangement of society could you arrive at sexual satiety, and this seems to be the clear arrangement of the Creator. There is the imagination; but the imagination by itself does not act materially. It must be stirred to action. The energy is provided by the exuberance of the sexual appetite. It is, so to say, an economical arrangement. "Nature" is full of such contrivances. For example, the domestic hen's ability to lay many more eggs than could possibly survive as birds provides innumerable tables with one of the most perfect foods. There is no room for all the oaks which could be grown from all the acorns, but acorns make an admirable poached egg for pigs.

The human face has an apparatus called the eyes for grasping things at a distance. It has a thing called the nose for taking in air and grasping things by scent. It has a hole in the middle for taking in food. By combining all these and other contrivances we are able to put them to uses other than their immediate physical uses. We *smile* with our lips. We forget that we are smiling with the edges of a food hole – using its subtle and delicate membranes for a purpose foreign to their primary physical purpose – it is as though we did actually contrive to shoot the square root of 2 with a gun! Not only does man "not live by bread alone" but he is not satisfied by bread which is merely nourishing according to a chemical analysis. And, on the other hand, he cannot support his earthly life simply by nourishing his mind; so paintings and sculptures, music and poetry must have a kind of usefulness. They must be in some way attached to earthly life and be part of it if they are to retain their vigour and not disintegrate and degenerate into pure abstraction. "Art for Art's sake" is as unhealthy as bread for bread's sake.

"The value of the creative faculty" derives from the fact that that faculty is the primary mark of man. To deprive man of its exercise is to reduce him to subhumanity. It is not at all out of kindness to animals, the thing we call "humanitarianism",* it is not at all from motives of benevolence that we demand scope for man's creative faculty. It is first of all from motives of rebellion against an irrational and demoniac society – a society diabolical in its direction and destructive of the very nature of man. The value of the creative faculty is that its use enables man to save his soul – for without that faculty he has no soul to save. You cannot save the soul of an automaton; for an automaton has no saveable soul. When they say, when the Catholic priest says: "A man can be a very good Catholic in a factory", he is of course speaking the exact truth. . . . But it remains true that a man is as out of place in a factory as in a lightless dungeon, and that as continual darkness atrophies the eye, so continual intellectual irresponsibility atrophies the creative faculty and makes men less than men. If the populations of our factory towns were not constantly recruited from the country they would wither intellectually as certainly as they wither morally and physically. A man can be a very good Catholic in a factory. Yes, but only so long as he remains a *man*.

Some people in our curious society will say: What? You don't mean to say people can't be saved without the arts and crafts; you don't surely mean that the arts and crafts are necessary to salvation? In reply, I might begin by asking: What do you suppose the arts and crafts are for? There is an old saying that "women are saved by child-bearing". And we may say that all men are saved by labour, for to labour is to pray. But the saying has no meaning if the labour is not the labour of men but of automatons. And it is not the labour of men when the men who do it are deprived of intellectual responsibility for it. The labour of bees is neither prayer nor praise, except that by their labour God praises Himself. In so far then as the works of men are not the product of the creative imagination, they are not properly the works of men, and the labour that goes to their making is destructive of humanity and therefore destructive of their souls and inimical to salvation.

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* The humanitarian is that kind of person who accepts the degradation of humanity which Industrialism involves, but wishes to ameliorate the lot of the degraded victims by factory legislation, the protection of children, the provision of safety regulations where machinery is used, the provision of medical clinics and uplifting entertainments, the spreading of contraceptive instruction and apparatus among what she calls the "working classes".

Obviously, we have not yet achieved such a consummation. We have not yet reduced industrial workers to a complete intellectual irresponsibility. I imagine that it would be impossible to do so. Men will certainly rebel before it could be done. Our masters, the financiers and usurers, will all be bankrupt before their system can be perfected. A civilization founded upon avarice and the worship of power has in it the poison which will destroy it. "Men are not united except in things of the spirit" and they have denied the spirit. They have denied the formal and final causes.

But the destruction of humanity is the goal of Industrialism. It is a goal it can never reach, but it is the goal at which it is directed. And even if it could be shown that no soul has yet been lost, myriad souls have been maimed by it.

You must note that in all this I am not speaking as a member of that peculiar class of persons called "artists" – people who hanker after aesthetic satisfactions and who only value things on account of the aesthetic satisfactions they provoke. I do not decry aesthetic satisfaction, but I do not believe in arguing from it. If you said: "There's something wrong with Leicester; it's got a putrid smell" – I should say: "That's pretty good evidence." If you said: "There's something wrong with Leicester; it's so ugly" – I should say that too was good evidence. But the trouble then would be that, whereas nearly everyone agrees about bad smells, no two people will agree about ugliness. In fact, you will find that most people who live in Leicester either don't notice its ugliness or else they deny it. From my point of view Leicester is ugly. But from my point of view the whole civilization of Leicester is wicked and foolish, and its ugliness seems to me a natural and proper consequence. So I say, don't let's talk about beauty at all – let's talk only about the good and the true, and let us assume, what seems to me self-evident, that there is not in fact any such thing as beauty as a separate quality in things; but that beauty is simply the manifestation, the radiance of truth and goodness combined. And so I say look after goodness and truth, and beauty will take care of itself.

So I am not talking as an artist. I am not arguing as an aesthetician. I have no use at all for "art" as commonly understood today (Art with a large "A" – the Fine Arts, the things put in museums and quite right too). I would abolish the Fine Arts altogether. Music – let us sing in church, and at work, and at harvest festivals, and wedding parties, and all such times and places. . . . But let us abolish the concert hall. Painting and Sculpture – let us paint and carve our houses, and churches, and town halls, and places of business. . . . But let us abolish art galleries and Royal Academies and picture dealers. Architecture – let us employ builders and engineers, and let them be imbued with human enthusiasms and not be moved merely by the desire for money or by merely utilitarian standards. Poetry – let those who can, write our hymns and songs and prayers. Let them write dirges for funerals and songs for weddings, and let them go about and sing to us or read to us in our houses. . . . But let us abolish all this high nonsense about poets who are "not as other men". And let us abolish all the art schools and museums and picture galleries.

"The artist is not a special kind of man – but every man is a special kind of artist" – because every man, because he is a man, has the creative faculty, is a creature with imagination. And a civilization which denies it, which thinks art is something special, that to be an artist requires special gifts – a civilization which condemns the majority of those engaged in the necessary work of the world to "a sub-human condition of intellectual irresponsibility", a civilization, therefore, in which the primary and often the sole object of working is wages (as profits and dividends are the sole object of our employers) and all things are made for sale – such a civilization is vile and damned, and such a civilization is ours today.

And because, in spite of everything, we are unable to deny "the value of the creative faculty", for we remain men whatever degradations we suffer or inflict, we must even place a special value upon it – give it a special worship. We place the artist on a pedestal and teach him to thank God he is "not as other men are". We make him into a hot-house flower and place his works in sort of temples called museums and art galleries. We even make some artists into Lords and Knights. . . .

And worst of all, we think that the creative faculty is a special faculty, only possessed by special people, the special people called "artists". Those who paint pictures and make sculptures, those who write music and poetry, and architects! We think creation only means creating special things, we don't realize that the creative faculty, the imagination, is necessary to the mere existence of humanity. The bank clerk and the shop assistant, the lorry driver, the doctor and the lawyer must have the creative imagination as much as those other workmen, the artists. You must imagine the act you are about to perform; you must see it as a thing made – a thing with "form" and "end". If you do not so see it, it is not a human act. It is only to acts so seen, so imagined, that free will applies. And therefore it is only such acts that can merit praise or blame.

So the creative faculty is not a special and peculiar gift. It is the common faculty of men – their distinguishing mark. And good politics are those which foster and encourage and develop human responsibility and enlarge the sphere of the creative imagination. And bad politics are those which discourage and diminish and destroy it.

We are saved by good will, but we cannot see *good* without the creative faculty. So the value of the creative faculty is that it makes a man a man. ***And it is man who has been redeemed.***

Many Adventures

A Second Chapter from an Autobiography

RALPH ADAMS CRAM

I HAVE already referred to my experience on the *Transcript* as art critic; in spite of the good that came from a broadened outlook on art and life through the personal associations and practical experience in forming judgements and in literary composition, it was not altogether a happy period, particularly in the circumstances of its termination. After hurling Quixotic defiance at the ever courteous and reasonable editor, I descended the long stairs to Washington Street literally without a job. I had forsaken architecture, journalism had cast me out, and there was no place for me to go. Still, one must live. Was it Oscar Wilde or another who, when the same plea was made to him by a necessitous but inopportune individual replied, "I am not prepared to admit the necessity"? In any case a necessity it seemed to me, so for a year or two I eked out a precarious existence by doing various odd jobs; designing wall papers for the friendly George K. Birge of Buffalo, writing and illustrating articles for *The Decorator and Furnisher* – most awful things they were; wall paper, furniture designs, and articles – and in helping kind ladies with other designs for such "decorating and furnishing" as they might need.

All the time, however, there was the underlying conviction that it was a great world. That romance and poetry and beauty were coming back to a drab century and that in some way I was to find my place amongst the bearers of glad tidings. The time-honoured organ of such an Evangel always has been, I suppose always will be, some sort of magazine. I have been implicated in several such ventures, all of them, except *The Commonweal*, short-lived, and the first of these, which indeed never came to birth, was gestated as the result of an idea which was, I still think, a good one. It was no less than a monthly publication dealing with all the arts, including letters, postulating the unity of art and its basic importance in the scheme of life; each section being under the control of some recognized specialist. I cannot imagine how I did it, but the idea must have been more convincing than its advocate for all the people I wanted came in and the proposed staff consisted of Henry Clapp for drama, W. F. Apthorp for music, Louise Guiney for poetry, Maude Howe Elliot for other literature, William Ordway Partridge for sculpture, H. B. Warren (I think) for painting, while I was to do architecture and be a sort of managing editor. Barrett Wendell and Bernard Berenson were also drawn into the web. I cannot now remember the chosen title but Partridge invented it and made the cover design. All was in readiness for the launching – except the mere formality of financing the venture – when the blow fell. Incontinently it was revealed that the contracts between the newspapers and their respective critics provided that they should do no other regular work for other publications. Thus both Apthorp and Clapp were automatically eliminated and the house of cards ignominiously collapsed. Coming in sequence on the loss of the Rotch Scholarship and the *Transcript* fiasco, this was too much; my one wish was to get away from it all. So at forty-eight hours' notice I accepted a sudden offer of a friend to go to Europe with him and his new wife as tutor to the step-son he had acquired by this same marriage.

We found ourselves in Rome late in the autumn, none of us, by that time, in very good spirits. Rome received us in most surly fashion: it rained all the time, was bitterly cold, the pension on the Pincio was dreary, human relationships were being strained to the utmost, and incidentally I was, I suppose, the most ineffectual tutor at large. On the other hand I was seeing Rome (I had stopped short of this universal bourne when in Italy a year and a half before) and finding out a lot about architecture I had never suspected, even if the knowledge was gained in the midst of rain and snow and sleet. This was much, but the great thing was that here I made a new friend who was to play a vital part, though only too brief, in my life. This was one T. Henry Randall, a young architectural student from Maryland. I do not remember how I first met him, but I am persuaded it could have been the result of no accident.

I have lived long enough to learn that it is these personal contacts that count. For sixty years I have read incessantly and, while I have travelled over the world so widely that I have seen pretty much all the good architecture and most of the other art of Western Europe, never have I been taught anything of lasting value by a school or a professional teacher, while I had seven years' experience in trying, in my turn, to teach others. There is no reason to disparage the results of contact with the great art of the past, or of such as has been mercifully preserved to us out of the wreckage of war and fanaticism and complacent ignorance; none to discount the subconscious results of book-reading. Both have their place and do their work, but I am firmly persuaded that for the stimulating of inner potential, for the building up of any sort of personal entity, it is the association with dynamic personalities, the interplay of minds and characters that bring concrete results. There are men and there are women who for a time enter one's life and, so to speak, become the "enacting clause" that makes operative the latent power that otherwise would remain without effect or realization.

I could name four or five people who have done this for me, and I imagine anyone else could do the same. If not I am sorry for him; he has missed one of the essential elements in life. Amongst these personalities that have been an evocative and formative influence in my life I must place Henry Randall high in the list. Representing the best social tradition of the Old South, he had a personality of singular charm and a passion for good architecture that did much to rebuild the fabric of my vision and set me on the way of architecture again. Also, though unconsciously, he helped me to find a definite religion for myself — not the least of the counts in my indebtedness to him. When I first met him in Rome, I was of the ordinary type of bumptious and self-satisfied youth who, in his mental superiority, scorns all religions other than the ethical culture and respectful deism of the "liberal" Protestant denominations. Randall was an Episcopalian of the sound Southern sort, vitalized by

Catholic tendencies, and when the matter of religion came up, as of course it was sure to do sooner or later, I found my rationalistic self-sufficiency showing rather thin in the light of his definiteness and certainty.

By this time I discovered I could not argue with any deep confidence because all the art of a thousand years, in which I was fast becoming immersed, was getting in its deadly work and I was beginning to realize that if it had validity, if it related itself to life, it was not the life of rationalism and physical science and liberal Unitarianism, but very specifically the life of the Catholic Church. Furthermore, what I had seen of desecration and destruction in England and France during the era of the Protestant Revolution, not to speak of the sort of "art" that had followed after this upheaval, had demonstrated rather clearly that this sort of thing, from Luther, Calvin, Knox, and Cromwell to the latest phases of so-called religious thought, had produced nothing whatever with which I could have anything to do. It was all to lead one to think furiously, and when I tried to meet Randall on his own ground it was with no firm basis on which to stand and even, increasingly, without conviction.

Two years before, when I was wandering through North Italy, I had come to Assisi and there, in the Lower Church, before the tomb of St. Francis, by some unaccountable impulse I had found myself on my knees and trying to say something in the way of prayers. I did not make out very well for it was actually the first time in my life when anything of the sort had happened. With a mystical philosopher for a father and a mother of keen rationalistic convictions (albeit a poet), prayer, or indeed anything approaching formal religious action, was out of the question, and I had been allowed to go my own way. The sudden impulse there before the tomb of the Saint was, I think, genuine, but for the time without lasting results, and it soon passed out of mind.

Now it happened (is that the word, I wonder?) that Randall had obtained two tickets for the Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve in the Church of San Luigi dei Francesi and he asked me, casually enough, if I would like to go. Quite willing to try anything once, I assented. Architecturally the church is not one that appealed to me then or appeals to me now, being Rococo of a most elaborate sort, but that night it was blazing with hundreds of candles, crowded with worshippers, and instinct with a certain atmosphere of devotion and of ardent waiting. For the half-hour after we arrived it was quite still except for the subdued rustle of men and women on their knees and the delicate click of rosaries. Then, in their white and gold vestments, the sacred ministers came silently to the high altar attended by crucifers, thurifers, and acolytes and stood silently waiting. Suddenly came the bells striking the hour of midnight and with the last clang the great organs and the choir burst into a melodious thunder of sound, the incense rose in clouds, filling the church with a veil of pale smoke, and the Mass proceeded to its climax with the offering of the Holy Sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Christ. I did not understand all of this with my mind, but *I understood.*

On the way home through the dark Roman streets, Randall remarked that he was going next morning to an early service of Holy Communion at the English Church. I told him, somewhat to my own surprise, and to his, that I would go with him, which I did, though only of course to "assist" at the Mass, not to receive. As soon as I got back to Boston I went over to the Church of St. John the Evangelist and placed myself in the hands of Father Hall for instruction, and shortly after was baptized – young Mr. Brent, later Bishop of the Philippines, being my sponsor – and in due course I received the Sacrament of Confirmation in the Anglican Communion of the Catholic Church.

By New Year's, conditions had just about become intolerable, but a way out was revealed. Randall and I had been working in the older churches, particularly those in the Trastevere, making very careful drawings of the Cosmati and Opus Alexandrinum inlays and mosaics, when in one of these churches we picked up two young naval officers who were, I think, cruising perilously on the ancient U.S.S. *Quinebaug*. We became rather friends and later one of them said to us, "You fellows seem to be sharks on mosaics, why don't you go to Sicily? We have just been there and the whole town of Palermo is rotten with that sort of thing. Besides, the weather is fine and warm there and you can get away from this awful climate."

It is shameful to have to admit that at that time neither of us had heard of Palermo, much less of Monreale, the Capella Palatine or the Martorana, but then, we were only twenty-five and in those days Sicily was as unknown as Mallorca was a few years ago.

Incontinently I severed relations with my patron and his family, to our mutual relief and gratification, and, after the worst sea-voyage Randall or I had ever made, even though it lasted only fourteen hours, found ourselves established in the ancient Hotel Marina in the altogether delectable city of Palermo. For three months we revelled in a new world of inspiring art. Daily we drew and sketched in the churches of Palermo or up at Monreale, going by tram to the latter shrine, sketching inordinately, eating our luncheons by the fountain in the corner of the cloister, then back at night to our quarters.

Here was indeed a new thing in architecture! Roman columns, pointed arches, Byzantine mosaics, Arab inlays of marble and coloured glass, Renaissance altars and tombs, and all knit together in a perfectly harmonious and organic synthesis. After this showing it was impossible for either of us to become a purist in point of style or to regain our theoretical confidence in the Academic training then current at the Ecole des Beaux Arts and at the schools in America that were faithfully following its lead. It was a great lesson to learn and one I never forgot.

After the Christmas experience in Rome, a return for Holy Week seemed indicated, and was accomplished once the Greek and Roman vestiges of Sicily were surveyed, together with those of Paestum. This was the first classical work with which I had come in contact and somehow it was neither stimulating nor convincing. It was not until forty years later that a yachting cruise to Greece and the islands of the Aegean revealed the authentic thing in Athens and the Peloponnesus, that Hellenic art began to mean something, and by then it was too late.

Rome had a new quality at Easter. It was not alone the loveliness of an Italian spring, blotting out the memory of the winter's wretchedness; for now the churches with their ceremonies and solemnities shone with a new significance. St. John Lateran, Sta. Maria Maggiore, even St. Peter's took on a new light and what, before, had been no more than interesting archaeology and abstract architecture (some of it, to me, most offensive) now related itself to life in its splendid continuity and significance. Thereafter and lastingly, all the churches of all Europe, with their pictures and sculpture and all their other arts became instinct with life, even when, as in France and Germany and England, they had been despoiled and shattered and reduced, sometimes, to no more than crags of blasted masonry by the hand of ignominious savagery. All these became living things, deathless records of a glorious idea, more significant in a way than the men who had created them or, in turn, brought them to ruin and desolation.

Working slowly northward through Orvieto and Assisi, Perugia, Siena, and Florence, we headed for Venice with the spring in the lead. I had seen all this shortly before, but then I was alone, so seeing a scant half of what these cities could offer, and assimilating only a moiety of that. Now, with Randall in alliance, there were revelations at every step, and under the stimulus of old beauty, and the increasing knowledge of the old Catholic culture that had brought it into being, the inner conviction was growing daily that after all it was architecture as a profession that had claimed me as its own. And Randall had a large part in this. It is quite possible that, had I not come my cropper in journalism and fled to Europe in discouragement and desperation; had I not met him by accident in the cold gloom and the mental depression of that Roman winter, I might perfectly well have drifted off into some other undesignated activity – the theatre, perhaps, or writing or teaching – and so missed the chance of participation in what is, I honestly believe, one of the noblest professions open to man. I am grateful to his memory for more things than this. Inexplicably, unhappiness pursued him after a few years and he died before he could work out all the real artistic possibilities that were in him.

Requiem aeternam dona ei Domine, et lux perpetuam luceat ei.

Venice really settled the matter so far as an architectural career was concerned. As I have already said, this and Bayreuth had been the twin Meccas of my first pilgrimage in '86, and now in the light of the recent Roman happenings, both personal and ecclesiastical, Venice worked its will with redoubled vigour and to a very definite conclusion. *The Stones of Venice* started it all, of course, as far back, perhaps, as the year 1876, but there was also a most engaging essay by W. D. Howells in, I think, *Harper's Magazine*, that gave added incentive. It began, if I remember correctly, "When you are ready to leave Venice, call for your bill, pay it – and stay." In so far as possible I have always followed this advice since.

Frequently, in later years, when architectural students have asked me where they should go and what they should do, I have told them that so long as they travelled widely, saw the old work clearly and sketched incessantly, it did not much matter so long as they ended up with a long stay in Venice. This was not because they would find there what they could use in a "practical" way in future but because every architect must, and as early in life as possible, immerse himself in beauty. Without this quality there can be no valid art of any kind. I think perhaps that if every protagonist of modernistic art, from the devotees of Bantu and Congo carving to the kindergarten scribblings of "surréaliste" painting and the prodigies of "architecture vivante", could have been exiled (or rather repatriated) in Venice for six months, society would have been spared much, though something would have been lost to its sense of humour.

In those far-away days of the middle eighties, Venice was pure beauty. True, the railway trains did smoke hideously in to the islands from Mestre, there was a scandalous iron bridge at one point across the Grand Canal, while the public "vappori" did on occasion ply their trade along the major waterways. Not having known the place in the old Ruskinian days, these things did not matter so much to youth just escaped, for the moment, from nineteenth-century America. Now it is measurably different. Motor cars can come in across the grand new causeway as far as the outer edge of the city. No farther, as yet, thank God! A few more *calle* have been filled in and made into streets while, worst of all, the whole place is infested with multitudinous speedboats of every sort, lashing the once placid waters into riotous turmoil, steadily undermining the foundations of the palaces, and offending the air with raucous din and the stink of petrol.*

The question has been raised as to which was the greatest calamity that has afflicted the world of man: the printing press or gunpowder. Without in the least prejudicing the case against either of these era-making discoveries, I should unhesitatingly postulate a third as superior in devastating quality, and that is the internal combustion engine. Think it out in all its accomplishments, potentialities, and implications, and the idea may not seem so preposterous after all.

In spite of everything the old Venice still lasts, the most consistent and concentrated synthesis of beauty in the world. Moreover it intensified for me, and should for any architect, the fact, just revealed in Sicily, that there really is, at least for us today, no such thing as a definitely walled-in style or what the schools call "pure architecture". Here are "styles" innumerable and none of them that could be called "pure" – at least until you come down to the Renaissance decadence. St. Mark's, thanks be to God, is all sorts of things assembled and crystallized into a sort of Apocalyptic unity in diversity. The same is true of the Doge's Palace, the Gothic churches of San Giovanni e Paolo and the Frari, the Byzantine and Gothic palaces of the Grand Canal, the exquisite and purely personal Santa Maria dei Miracoli, and a score of other lovely things; one does not even mind the Vitruvian classic of the Libreria Vecchia and the Baroque of the Salute. They all fit in somehow and together afford an ocular and intellectual demonstration of the eternal and God-given *fact* of Beauty.

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* Even as I write this, amazing word comes from Venice that the miracle has happened and that the Podestà has issued an edict that for the future all steamboats and motor boats are to be banished from the Grand Canal. The news is almost too good to be true, but we accept it in faith. *Laus Deo!*

So Venice consolidated the gains won through Palermo. It was to be architecture for the future if place could somehow be found for a temporary renegade, and it was now just a matter of getting back to Boston and first principles, and making that place in one way or another. Funds for maintenance were entirely gone and the sources hitherto relied upon for loans had ruthlessly shut down. I tried to think they were in league with destiny.

By way of Verona and the Brenner Pass to Innsbruck with its valley castles, in one of which, Schloss Matzen, there was found the wide and genial hospitality of the *hochwohlgeboren*, and so to Switzerland and the through-train for the Calais-Dover boat. This was the end of apprenticeship; in some way architecture as a profession would have to be accomplished.

Irving Babbitt, Undergraduate

W. F. GIESE

IT WAS at the end of our freshman year at Harvard that I first met Irving Babbitt. I had seen him during the preceding months from time to time in a class in Greek, but only at a distance, as he boldly exposed himself in the front-row outposts, while I prudently dug in in the more populous rear rows where there was a supposed safety in numbers. Seated in solitary prominence, bent over his desk and book, he would every now and then look up suddenly to propound some recondite question to the new-fledged doctor who presided, and who was not yet sufficiently panoplied in philologic omniscience to answer as many questions as an ingenious undergraduate, bent on mischief, could ask and, to the tutor's manifest discomfiture, could even contrive by subtle indirection to answer for him. I was more favourably impressed by Babbitt's learning than by the use he made of it. Out of sympathy for the baited pedagogue, I had dubbed this over-helpful freshman "Assistant Professor Babbitt", and he was so known in the back rows.

One afternoon, quite unexpectedly, he dropped in at my room. Tall, handsome, athletic in build, but with a marked stoop that hinted of bookish pursuits, very blond, with a roseate complexion that a girl (in those days) might have envied, he was an arresting apparition. He had a preoccupied and earnest expression that was distinctively his own, a certain nonchalant gait, and a visible unconcern with any dandiacal pretensions. A foe to Bohemianism even at that date, he nevertheless half-unconsciously steered pretty close to the coast of Bohemia. A defender of form and convention in the name of decorum, he was apt to be a bit elastic in his observance of them, for his innate love of independence always wrought mightily in him. This was an unacknowledged concession to temperament, for in theory he always maintained that it was only by observing the petty conventions that one could earn, and that hardly, the right to reconsider the great ones. He was an original figure, even at first sight a little outside any current category of undergraduate individualism, visibly intent on an inner life of his own and undistracted by the merely temporal and local.

He came upon a little group of us chatting about the usual nothings of the hour. The conversation, however, soon lost all trace of conventional tameness. Propositions such as usually go unquestioned, or meet with mild assent or short-lived scrutiny, were stared into with startling penetration and decisiveness, as if the essential nature of things were a matter of vital importance even to freshmen. It was evident that a lover of truth – and of analysis – had descended upon us. Superficial remarks were convicted of futility; more serious ventures, of inadequacy; and as usual with Babbitt, the loose peripheral threads of discourse were inexorably drawn together to converge on problems of life and conduct. For Babbitt, as for Matthew Arnold, conduct was always three-fourths of life – in fact, so very nearly four-fourths that I am persuaded that the disaffected among his readers have for the most part risen in revolt not so much against his ideas as against a seriousness that concedes so little margin for the unrenounced frivolity of human nature. The conversation ranged over a wide field of thought, ancient and modern, and shunned neither the heights nor the depths — I remember translating for the benefit of my guest one or two poems of Leopardi and exciting his admiration for the poet's dream of immersion in the infinite,

M'è dolce naufragar in questo mare.

On this occasion, as always, he was quick to exhibit the irrepressible militancy which a callow sentimentalist, steeped in Rousseau, was bound to provoke in any encounter with such a hard-headed apostle of the rational and the superrational. I was in the period of exuberant immaturity when one is waiting to be tried out for a part in the human drama, while he had been cast for his and was already playing it with a power that makes it a little hard to distinguish the débutant from the master that he was to become.

The conversation left me vaguely overwhelmed, profoundly impressed, and at the same time a bit disquieted, as a naïve and unfledged ephebe might have been after enjoying the painful pleasure of having his little stock of conventional ideas subjected to analysis by Babbitt's great model, that merciless dialectician who haunted the Athenian market-place and amused himself by insidiously removing the underpinning from the random philosophies by which insufficiently inquiring minds professed to live and die. The experience must have been very similar, except that Babbitt was even more intent on convicting as well as convincing his interlocutor.

This first experience was to be almost daily renewed during the two years that we spent together as sophomores and seniors. What he said has been, except in the most general outlines, obliterated by nearly half a century of time, but how vividly I recall his downrightness of manner, the uncompromising directness of his ever-recurrent *argumentum ad hominem*, the destructiveness of his polemic, and his staunch refusal to make any charitable concessions to that weakness of human nature which makes us cling to even our most demonstrably false or fragile notions as infinitely precious simply because they are our own. For Babbitt opinions were no more individual goods and chattels than light or air. This argumentative fervour did not make for diplomacy. I once heard him, when an instructor in French, say to the chairman of his department that French was only a cheap and nasty substitute for Latin. Such outspokenness often obfuscated interlocutors at first encounter. "I am not thin-skinned," he used to say, "and I do not readily adjust myself to people who are."

It has always remained a riddle to me why this unshorn individualism should ever have troubled anybody after the first salutary shock — the whole-souled innocence behind even its most drastic operations was so obvious. It lay in that superior openness of nature, that remoteness from all malice, that magnanimity which was Babbitt's central trait, and which made his homage to truth so purely and so fascinatingly impersonal. This detachment could by no means be confounded with that light-hearted indifference which so readily usurps its place. It was really the animating principle of his thought, whose guiding spirit was a constant moderation. This has not been commonly noted even by his avowed disciples, yet no one can overpraise this quality which gives to all his writing, in spite of its practical and almost hortatory trend, such a stamp of authority and dignity. It is noteworthy that even the most exasperating misinterpretations of unsympathetic reviewers never elicited personal retort from him – his concern was solely with ideas and their application. He was from the start essentially a philosopher, I am tempted to say a born philosopher – if I dared use so deterministic an expression to characterize one so hostile to deterministic formulas.

Such was the impression he made in those early days, quite as distinctly as later. He seemed to have achieved maturity at a bound, without needing to go through a maturing process. Some of the great intellectualists that he studied, such as Taine and Renan, were apt at the same age to reveal their immaturity by an unreasonable idolatry of reason and a canonization of mere learning under the name of a "sacred curiosity". One of my most distinct recollections is of his reiterated attacks on the omnivorous reading incident to the first lively contact with the things of the mind. He would emit startling maxims such as this: "The function of books is to teach us to despise them." That has an obscurantist ring, but the maxim was evidently interpreted in a soundly conservative fashion by one who renewed his contempt for books by daily and hourly contact with them, though always on a markedly selective basis.

He would elaborate no less startling arguments as to the limitations of the intellect and the vanity of what he mockingly called the attempt to bottle the infinite. This indictment he brought particularly against ontologic and cosmologic theories: they were only illicit pryings of the inquisitive mind into the unknowable, intellectually pompous rather than edifying. He would fortify his argument by dilating on Buddha's proscription of the "unthinkables", about which mere speculation was bound to prove eternally sterile. He was already deeply immersed in Buddhism, and its influence in shaping his thought is so plain from the start that other influences (barring Aristotle) need hardly be invoked except as enriching tributaries. The ultimate convictions behind his humanism (which seemed then only an emerging aspect of his philosophy) are to be fully understood only in this Oriental light, however Aristotelian his analytic method. Buddhism preaches the extinction of all desire, and is thus radically anti-romantic. When I ventured to cast a doubt on the moral efficacy of such un-European doctrines, he humorously exclaimed: "What! You don't think Buddhism a good religion – a religion that has fourteen hells!" When, as a new-made bachelor of arts, he applied for a post as teacher (under a certain Dr. Fell!) he jestingly consulted me as to the propriety of setting himself down as a Unitarian or a Buddhist.

He had already laid down the main lines of his thought, and with such sureness that what one might call its orthodox canon was already implicit in its earliest formulations. I never had the sensation later of finding any real discontinuity or marked reversal of opinion on any large matter of doctrine. There were, however, some things that tended to recede in later days into a discreet background, which, possibly because of my stubborn recalcitrance, seemed then to be emphasized overmuch. Though my scepticism could win no recognition except that of confutation, I offered a convenient compendium of what he then and always set down as the two main fallacies of the typical modern. I had, like most aspiring freshmen, what is flatteringly called an open mind – what more truthfully should be called an empty mind, one that exchanges salutation and converse with any ideas that move up and down the main-travelled road. In those late Victorian days there were, especially prominent, two such wayfarers, the naturalism that leaned on Darwin, and the sentimentalism that derived from Rousseau. I thus furnished the perfect strawman for gladiatorial practice. Naturalism and supernaturalism, free-will and determinism, innovation and tradition, romanticism and good sense, these formed the recurrent matter of argument. During these two years of unbroken intercourse, our serious conversation circled a hundred times about these themes. We would set out in the early evening for a long walk, as often as not three hours in duration, the stretch between Harvard Square and Arlington being all too short to span the interval between premise and conclusion.

This course in peripatetic philosophy would usually wind up with an epilogue of half an hour at my doorstep, where I was left at last, driven in from all my outposts and in complete retreat all along the line. But the transformation of fixed prejudices is a notably slow process. Overnight the tightly drawn threads of persuasion would mysteriously unravel, and the very next evening the old argument, emerging from some new angle, would start all over again. The naturalistic Will to Sleep imposed by healthy adolescence, and the fatigue of a prolonged walk, must account for my failure to jot down in their freshness these earliest expositions of Babbitt's philosophy. So far as I know, he never met with a Boswell, and all one can do is to extol, without reproducing it, that golden flow of talk which, with all the variety and substance of his writing, had a lightness of touch and an effervescent play of wit that might well incline one to prefer these spontaneous outpourings to their more formal embodiment.

It must not be inferred, however, that he had any need of the spur of opposition to draw out his powers. They were always at his command and did not wait on occasion. He created his own occasions. The stream of his talk was borne in easeful and swelling volume down from its high mountain-cradle in Pamere (I mean from the soaring heights of Brahminic or Buddhistic speculation), to circle around any casual theme, and the majestic river floated on through unobstructing areas of tributary silence, winding its way through the most richly varied intellectual landscape till it immerged itself at last in some far-seen and all-embracing philosophic conclusion. This Oriental strain in him seemed then even more pronounced than later when the practical trend of his teaching imposed on it a more subdued and modernized exterior. In this mood he would talk for hours on some freshly read volume of Spence Hardy or Rhys Davids or Oldenburg, or on this or that aspect of the ethical absolutism and the abysmal psychologic insight of the East. Whole evenings would go to Apollonius of Tyana, to Plotinus, or to Porphyry, whom he was studying in the huge and forbidding octavos of the Didot edition. Or deserting his specially favoured fields, he would discourse with equal zest and readiness on Japanese art, or Greek tragedy, or Goethe's *Faust*, or Arnold's *Literature and Dogma*, or, digressing yet farther, he would hold forth for an hour or two on a volume of Eliphas Lévi (of all men!) and move on from this to a disquisition on the precarious basis of our modern scientific orthodoxy, or from the analysis of such a book as Walt Whitman's *Democratic Vistas* to an excursus on the psychology of the latter-day American – without prejudice to a tribute in passing to the real talent of Whitman for prose (although he found this talent even more unmistakably revealed in his verse than in his prose).

But I must beware of dilating too much on Babbitt's extraordinary conversations, though I am convinced that he deserves a high rank among the great practitioners of the art. An enthusiastic eulogy of mine, when repeated to him, elicited the dry comment, "Hum! he makes me out a sort of talking-machine!" Let us return to the substance of his talk.

The supernatural he defended to the last ditch. Dogmatic denial of it he overruled even more peremptorily than Dr. Johnson overruled the sceptical lady who scoffed at serious consideration of ghosts: "Madam, this is a question which, after five thousand years, is yet undecided; a question, whether in theology or philosophy, one of the most important that can come before the human understanding." To Babbitt it seemed at any rate less undecided. He had been immersed in childhood in an atmosphere of spiritualism, and had absolutely none of the common inhibitions as to belief in what transcends ordinary experience. He would talk in the most matter-of-fact manner of having seen tables, nay, even pianos, float in the air, and used to laugh away my doubts of Madam Blavatsky's power of levitating herself piano-fashion into space. He professed himself so inured to the idea of supernatural apparitions as to be quite prepared to see, any night, without the slightest tremor of surprise, a ghost standing at his bedside. In order to give me a "healthy shock", he even took me on a personally conducted tour to a celebrated medium who had favoured the New York preacher, Dr. Parkhurst, with spectral manifestations. Unfortunately, her husband was unwilling to have her subject herself to the strain of evoking spirits from the vasty deep for the edification of two such obscure pilgrims through eternity, and so I remained without the shock. Babbitt was quite as uncompromising in vindicating the possibility of miracles, rejecting as purely empirical the argument from individual experience (or rather, non-experience).

This startingly crude supernaturalism was, I suspected, in great part a dialectical challenge to a naturalism unable to refute it. Confucius refused to talk about spiritual beings. In later years, Babbitt emulated this reticence. Thanks to Buddhistic influences, rather than to modern rationalism, the last vestige of theology was eliminated from his reasoning. In the later formulations of his thought he gave to the supernatural so little prominence that many, in fact most, of his readers fail to note that it still subsists as a mist-enshrouded Ultima Thule on the far edge of his humanism. There remained always his faith in a higher will, his mystic concept of an inner check, which was for him one of the primary data of experience. But beyond this, in the direction of dogma, he refused to go. Emerson's dictum that the man who makes immortality a dogma is already fallen was one of Babbitt's commonest quotations in those early days.

Determinism was the kindred heresy which drew his nightly fires. It spurred him into making the most uncompromising assertions of the freedom of the will. He was undeniably given to pushing this to its last reaches. He even seemed to believe in an absolute hegemony of the soul over the body: if the coursers ran away with the rider, the fault was never to be imputed to equine perversity. There was lack not of skill but of will. Again and again he repeated the un-Platonic couplet,

Der Mensch in seinem dunkeln Drange
Ist sich des rechten Weges wohl bewusst.

If concrete examples of what might seem the ineluctable malice of nature were propounded, they were incontinently brushed aside as unprofitable mysteries not to be explained and still less to be dwelt on. The persistence of this attitude is notable: in all his work Babbitt seems nowhere to take cognizance of nature's unhappy trick of thrusting a spoke into the psychic wheels. He would listen to no physiological explanations for spiritual waywardness. He inclined to sympathize with the stoical extremists who held that a philosopher may be so patient with the toothache as to disarm it of its pain. He would even, when he thought it was time for another healthy shock, cite strange and bewildering examples from his beloved Indian saints, Brahminic and Buddhistic, who took up their residence between bonfires, or held their arms horizontally outstretched for a twelvemonth at a time, or had themselves buried alive only to reissue from the earth a week later as much alive as before and holier than ever. The unquestioned free will was the most sacred tenet of his ethical creed. The determinist was for him a lost soul. The invoking of hereditary limitations as a brake on aspiration and enterprise, and the "indolent inbreeding of temperamental bias" he roundly denounced. "We never know what we can do till we try," he used to repeat.

His creed was nothing if not strenuous. He was always pleading a cause, and all his excursions led back to a definite point of view. He deprecated that intellectual ardour which bristles into activity at any random challenge. He had in this respect little resemblance to his lifelong favourite, Dr. Johnson, who was "equally able and willing to maintain the system of Newton or Descartes, and who sometimes exalted vegetables to sense and sometimes degraded animals to mechanism" in order to feed an argument. I used to rally him on his admiration for his burly Tory, so full of intemperate and paradoxical sallies, who in scorn of logic demolished Berkeley by kicking a stone, who professed not to care half-a-guinea what government he lived under, and who yawned over *Lycidas*! Babbitt's defence of Johnson brushed aside such irrelevancies and rested on his fundamental good sense which steered clear of every form of romantic illusion, on the firm and reverent grasp of first principles which routed all the fallacies of self-love. Babbitt always measured men by character more than by intellectual prowess and brilliancy; and in respect of will and character he claimed for the American, at least for the New Englander, a certain superiority to the more intellectual European. He seemed vaguely to feel that there was something wrong about me, and at last hit upon the cause: I was fundamentally European – a pure intellectualist, he added damningly. Being only a sophomore, I found this somehow soothing. Originality for originality's sake he looked askance at, and virtuosity was with him almost a term of reproach, a sort of juggling dexterity in tossing up three or four ideas in the air at the same time. For him the really original thinkers of the past were those who have accredited the commonplaces by which men live and have given these a patent of nobility.

He was by no means oblivious of the fact that this miracle is hardly to be operated even by the greatest thinkers except through the magic of style; but in his secret heart he seemed to suspect in this, as Renan did, something of frivolity. He scented a questionable dilettanteism in the artist's love of expression for expression's sake, of words for their music or their remote suggestiveness. He enjoyed these fine flavours of literature, but incidentally and in eschewing the audible ecstasies of the literary epicure. He was little given to discussing style, imagery, technique, and the allurements of art as such; and he was from the first so committed to the classic ideal that he gave short shrift to any kind of romantic overflow or decorative opulence. He carried, stored away in his capacious memory, many examples of curious felicity in style; but more commonly it was substance, not manner, that interested him. The variety and the aptness of his quotations are, I think, without parallel. They fit so inevitably into the structure of his thought that they seem to have been originally conceived to serve his purposes. The art of quotation – if it be an acquired art – might be learned from him. His aim was to put the universal experience of mankind, its collective wisdom, behind his ideas, and to make his ideas formulations and summaries of it. His use of other men's thoughts thus represents a research as strenuous as thinking itself.

His own manner of speech was of the substantial order, straightforward, unadorned, unimaged, owing its flashes of colour either to quotations artfully inwoven or to the antics of a playful humour, which in lighter vein regaled itself by caricaturing and distorting any illogical statement or any lapse from good sense in one's hurried interjections. He had, in dialoguing, a mischievous fondness for playing out the game of argument to a finish and inflicting a sudden and disastrous checkmate on any unwary advances of his opponent – a process not always relished by those whose sense of humour was less active than his own.

This scorn of ornament, of what he disdainfully called *fioritura*, was evident in his college theme-writing: it carried not a whit more of superfluous epithet or wordy magnificence than his published work, in which the ideas are so closed-packed that some readers seem to overlook them. This exclusive cult of the strenuous style that never stoops from work to play, involved undoubtedly a certain unacknowledged feud with the graces. It has even led some, who read Shelley and Blake with more discerning eyes than they turn on Babbitt, to assume that he read the poets only professionally and in a harshly Puritanic spirit. The frequency and the aptness of his verse quotations are enough to prove that he read the poets much more sympathetically than any unimaginative person would consent to do. One might more plausibly assume that it was the prose writers that he read professionally. The truth is that he read verse with delight as well as edification. A specialist in the poetry of solitude, I found myself much put to it to hold my own when we drifted one evening into the frivolous sport of capping verses on this theme. Babbitt was in those days rapturously (though with a decorously intellectual rapture) reading *Faust* for the first time, and innumerable bits of Goethean flotsam came to intermingle in his talk with bits of Lucretius, and of Arnold whom he greatly affected – far more than those idols of the age, Tennyson and Browning. On the other hand, Byron's superb power then and always seduced him more than such a strenuously antiromantic moralist should, in good logic, have allowed. The spiritual unrest, the morbid melancholy, and even the note of revolt, in these poets, he seemed to find just a little more sympathetic or significant than he did after he had grown more completely a stranger to even the vicarious visitations of such dangerous guests.

Any casual chat would recall pertinent passages or apposite stanzas or resplendent lines from some well-thumbed and ruthlessly penciled volume on his shelves, and when the arena of conversation had been transferred from the outdoor world to the study, the next step was to turn to the source and drink from the fountain-head. In this way he was forever pulling down the wit and wisdom of the ages from his shelves. He was not so ready to put it back again; and table, chairs, and floor were thickly littered with volumes, not a few of them eloquently open. This great lover of order was catholic enough to love disorder as well. He was fond of quoting the subtle saying of Charles Eliot Norton, that selfishness, driven out from the central stronghold, is apt to take refuge on the surface. With Babbitt, order, on the contrary, remained confined to the central stronghold. His "goody", incapable of such fine distinctions, reproachfully told him that his room looked as if it had been struck by a cyclone.

Very much alive to experience and to its significance, Babbitt always looked askance at the cloistered virtues that are invested with such peculiar sanctity among the worshippers of learning. He was not loath to work hard to learn their recondite secrets, but he inclined to treat his possession of these as one secret more. It was particularly the philologists that we met at first hand, and it was their exaggerated emphasis on research and their neglect of humane purpose and ideas that made him rebel against their *strengwissenschaftliche Methode*. At Paris he astonished the *savants* with whom he studied at the *Ecole des Langues Orientales* by devouring with breakneck speed page after page of the Sanskrit writings instead of blasting his way into them by slow grammatical mining and sapping. They respected his accomplishments, however, for he formed life-long friendships with several of the most distinguished among them, and was even urged, before his year of study was over, to devote himself to Oriental languages in the expectation of finding a place in the school. But his allegiance to the Greeks and Greek humanism prevailed.

Like most original minds he did not consent to owe any major debts to minds that were not original, and he consequently did not so much pass through the hands of his professors at Harvard as slip through them. Norton, whom he knew only later, was of course the exception. Harvard had at that time a shining galaxy of classical scholars, but they were in general specialists of that straiter sect which the prestige of Germany had set in the high places. Babbitt was to speak of them and their colleagues in the modern field as the Philological Syndicate. While never refusing to pay high tribute to their scholarship, the exacting standards of which he emulated, he took their pedagogy half humorously and half satirically. He especially rallied the professional tone of awe with which they discussed their learned mysteries and the contented narrowness of vision which confinement in didactic grooves is so apt to generate. He was perpetually girding at their pedantry – though he consented to suffer from it as little as was humanly possible. They accordingly viewed him with suspicion. When I once ventured to extol his Latinity to one of these learned pundits, I was silenced by the tart rejoinder: "I know nothing of it – he elected my course, and he has not attended above two or three times during the whole year." I fear this was mathematically exact, and not many of the professor's colleagues could have boasted of being better treated. Babbitt was warned by the registrar that he had more cuts than any man in Harvard. He received this certification of non-attendance with a visible satisfaction that hardly suggested the future advocate of convention and discipline. It was the one honorific distinction of his college career that he seemed to wear without due humility.

To us tame villatic fowl who religiously conformed with prescription he used to say: "We receive two educations, the one that is given us and the one that we give ourselves." He did not propose to let the former unduly crowd the latter. He thus had the appearance of being indolent. It was only an appearance. More than once, on dropping into his room, I found him lying on the floor, flat on his stomach and kicking up his heels in the air, his head propped on alternating hands, poring over Plato in the Greek, without notes. On a later occasion, during a hurried business trip across the continent he read eight hundred pages of Plato in transit. The prescribed tasks of the college routine he executed perfunctorily, though well. Sophomore English themes were due at a fixed hour. Babbitt usually made a mad rush to get his lucubration into the box (the ink barely dried) during the last five minutes. One day – it was at the end of our senior year – he asked me "to lend him my moral support" by accompanying him to Professor Goodwin's house. It was a matter of unusual urgency – a "forensic" on Aristotle, overdue! The great Hellenist calmly rebuffed the apologetic disciple: "My vacation began yesterday, Mr. Babbitt."

"But my graduation depends on this!" "I can't help that, Mr. Babbitt – your paper should have been handed in on time." Alas! the convinced apostle of discipline had encountered that not always agreeable thing – a convinced disciplinarian. The faculty, happily, was less convinced, and Babbitt was graduated, over Aristotle's dead body, with high honours.

His attitude toward the hierarchy of professors was on the whole one of aloofness – his interests were different from theirs. How did he regard his fellow-students? He was not a recluse. Very human (as becomes a humanist) and intensely alive (as becomes everybody), he always exalted the active and stirring qualities that go to make the accomplished citizen of the world. *L'honnête homme qui ne se pique de rien* was his ideal. Yet, though he picked up a fair number of casual acquaintances at college, he formed few ties. He was deeply impressed with the sense of man's ineluctable aloneness in the universe. The phrase of Arnold's that he quoted most frequently was "the imperious lonely thinking power". He put the social virtues on a lower plane than the virtues of the inner life, and he saw in the common inversion of this scale of values a main source of the growing superficiality of the American temper. Graces and charm, chivalry and sentiment, he held, should be taken for granted rather than magnified by dwelling on them, lest the external refinements replace what they pretend to adorn. The social instinct was not for him a wholly self-justifying one. He scorned mere gregariousness as much as Thoreau himself; he felt no need of rubbing noses to keep socially conscious.

He was the most even-tempered of mortals, never out of humour, never bored, never craving change or diversion, or company except on his own terms, those of intellectual companionship. His high spirits, combined with his philosophic imperturbability, absolutely excluded those ups and downs of mood and those moping melancholies by which youth contrives to set off a too insistent enjoyment of its own riches. He needed no such cordials or contrasts. He found life as he led it, calmly and contemplatively, a sufficiently varied adventure, and could see a windfall in any random experience. He was far too active inwardly to need outside activities. He joined no clubs or societies; and he took no part in any sport, though here I suspected him of repressed inclinations. He was no theatre-goer. Above all he was intensely averse to sentimental fervours. When he found a score of George Sand's novels lined up on my shelves, he hinted grave doubts as to my future, and, as regards the novels, he was ready to echo George III on Shakespeare: "Sad stuff, eh! sad stuff!" So, a dozen years later, when he found among his wedding presents a set of the Browning Letters, he exclaimed: "Good God! how can anybody think I am going to wade through all that slush!"

He saw in our novel-writing and novel-reading a symptom of decadence, a narcotic for stilling thought, a cheap device for the vicarious enjoyment of emotion, "erotic, neurotic, and tommyrotic". I never knew him to buy a novel but once: when we had been tramping for a month in the Green Mountains, he added to the meagre store of Greek texts that we carried in our knapsacks a copy of his favourite *Pendennis*, which he preferred to reread rather than break new ground. His references to the novel are few and far between, and his taste was decidedly for the masculine kind. In his work Jane Austen, Charlotte Brontë, George Eliot, are not once mentioned. It is true Dickens is mentioned but once, and Meredith and Trollope and Conrad and Turgenieff not at all. If he made a place for the literature of recreation, he made none for the literature of relaxation. Why relax, for example, by reading detective stories? Why not meditate – like Buddha under the bo-tree? Yet he too would relax, perhaps once in a twelvemonth, and then his meditation insensibly turned to revery: he heard the temple-bells of Mandalay and actually dreamed of an Arcadia, a hermitage in Buddhistic Burma, on the banks of the Irrawaddy. Alas! though he urged me month after month to join him in a tramp through Europe, and accused me of "quiet obstinacy" because I perforce refused, he never invited me to share his hut in Burma. Was this because I had confessed that Buddhism, for all its fourteen hells, left me cold?

Woman, the heroine of fiction and the not uncommon idol of undergraduate hearts (as *Pendennis* proves), had no shrine in his. To one who could linger delighted over the long-drawn sweetness of the *Nouvelle Héloïse*, he seemed like a reincarnation of the Hippolytus of Euripides. He took a perverse pleasure in playing the part. At any unguarded display of Occidental softness, he would quote a *sloka* from some Oriental ascetic, denouncing woman as a lure, a diabolic temptress, a perambulating illusion, a bag of bones – but enough! The Orient can wag a naughtier tongue than we against woman. If we chanced in our peregrinations to run across some extra-studious looking girl, let loose from the Radcliffe Annex, he would indulge in unflattering animadversions, which were easily stretched to include the New England woman and even woman in general. He did not foresee that he was destined to teach the Radcliffe girls for forty years (with emphatic appreciation of their studious turn), or that a kindly fate should lead him to select from among them the devoted helpmate and companion of his after life. He justified these ungallant attacks on the fair sex on the principle of the "healthy shock", and held that long exposure to the infectious atmosphere of George Sand's romances demanded allopathic treatment.

In short, though not unsociable, he was, as regards sentiment, himself very much a New Englander. Kindly, courteous, and practically helpful he was, but reserved to a degree that sometimes led the uninitiated to think him shy. As to friendship, he, though only on rare occasions, expressed himself with something more of romantic warmth; he was even capable, in a letter, at a safe distance (from Spain), and after an inexcusably prolonged silence, of apologising for not writing with more expansiveness; after which perilous approximation toward Rousseauism, he recoiled into objectivity and discreet picturing of local colour and customs, and the letter would end – to be followed by another in three months, or maybe six. "A frightful amount of time," he used to say, "is wasted in frivolous letter-writing." It is true he pushed his concessions to sentiment so far as to send me a copy of Espronceda, the most frenetic of romantic poets.

His notion of friendship was exalted to the level of antique magnanimity, as one learned on putting it to the test, but it was severe rather than indulgent. He eschewed flattery, even eulogy (save of the absent), and maintained a sometimes tantalizing detachment. He would point out one's faults and blunders with a fine acumen; but one's virtues, he felt, would sufficiently mirror themselves in consciousness without extraneous help. He would shake hands with athletic emphasis; but he never slapped you on the back or called you *old man* – which is perhaps a defect in a sophomore. But in so sage a sophomore, this was, when properly comprehended, a kind of virtue: you could take all his tenders for true pay. The offices of friendship consituted for him the essence of friendship, and if he so rarely translated his good-will into words, this was because he took it so magnificently for granted. He was to his intimates, in the trite words of the old dictum, a guide and philosopher as well as friend; and a friend, he was fond of repeating, should be a thorn in the side of his friends. He played this part with more vigour than abandonment; with a little provocation he could even be a thorn in both sides. His critical faculty made it an easy task, while his sharp-edged wit and aptness at retort made reciprocity anything but easy.

Yet as a serious moralist, he treasured up really edifying observations for future consideration. They had to be pushed, however, with some gallantry, past his outer defenses, which were always in good order. Once I ventured to suggest that his carriage was increasingly stooping: "Not at all," he interrupted, "but I have to stoop when I talk to a little runt like you", and his seventy-odd inches rose like a tower above my sixty-seven. Again when I diplomatically remarked that *our* handwriting fell a little short of the Spencerian standard, he epigrammatically reminded me that modesty, like charity, begins at home. He did not by any means belong to the race of those who are, in Sainte-Beuve's words, *nés disciples*: he was a born leader. You speedily felt that you were in his hands – he never consciously delivered himself into yours. Nature – and a very efficacious grace supervening upon nature – had decreed that he should be Kung-fu-tze and you only Hui or Yu; you might even be Yuan Zang, whom the master once kicked in the shins for a breach of decorum.

The temptation to turn the studious life into the sedentary life did not exist for him. I doubt if any one that knew Babbitt ever thought of him as sitting down: he seemed to be always standing or moving. For a half-dozen hours indoors he always made amends by an hour or two out of doors. He remained an indefatigable walker, as Cambridge and all its environs could attest. He even, to economize time, became a runner, and for years took his exercise in this strenuous form of super-pedestrianism. In Paris, at the midnight hour, the police about the Luxembourg Gardens mistook for a robber pursued by his victim what proved to be Babbitt and his gymnastic convert, the Norwegian mathematician Palmblad, circling the park at full speed. At Cambridge, a good three decades later, a startled Irishman, spying over the top of a trench a rapidly flying figure, was told by a better-posted comrade, "It's only that damned professor!"

A devotee of the outdoor life, Babbitt was also a lover of nature – and of the primitive! He might decry the primitivism of the sophisticated modern, the *rusticus in urbe* who fabricates it calmly seated at his desk; he cherished a more genuine and rugged primitivism of his own. He might in the winter season of lectures and conferences fulminate against Rousseau's return to nature, but when summer with its larger liberty came again, he invariably returned to nature himself, and made the New England lakes and mountains his fair-weather friends. He loved nature, not in the naturalist's minutely observant fashion, for which he had little gift, but in a large, acceptant, and joyous manner, that had in it a touch of the Homeric. He had a relish for spirited contact with primeval mountain and forest and sea. A hint of danger too did not come amiss. When I took him to task for swimming straight seaward in defiance of currents and undertow, he pleaded guilty to one form – though only one – of romanticism, the romanticism of adventure. It was this, no doubt, along with the more potent desire to know at first hand the cities and minds of men, that led him to spend his junior year tramping with a classmate from Havre to Gibraltar (in the blouse of an *obrero francés*) and from Naples to the North Sea.

It should be apparent that Babbitt tempered with a constant infusion of humour a philosophy that viewed with suspicion any wayward indulgence of the play-instinct in art or in life. His sense of humour was so alert that it enlivened even his most intellectual conversation and filled all the interstices in the business of life. With him humour was the spice of life just as decidedly as gravity was its substance. Both remained intact to the end. Under the learned professor the eternal adolescent with his keen relish for the comic was perpetually reappearing, as lively as he had been even in that remoter past than the one known to me, when he wrote a funny column for *Texas Siftings*, or when he mingled on terms of equality, fraternity, and brutality with New York street-arabs and gave with zest and received with sage unconcern the inevitable black eyes and bloody noses, or when, turned cowboy on his uncle's ranch, he amused himself by pulling a retiring rattlesnake out of its hole by the tail and whirling it around his head. Evidently the romanticism of adventure is not without dangers, almost as great as falling in love or plunging into revery. To be complete, let me add that the learned professor pre-existed in the adolescent. When still in the High School, Babbitt was reading Sophocles and Horace and dreaming of the philosophic life while scrawling over the margins of his text-books the Horatian maxim *Sapere aude*, and even carried his audacity so far as to plan a new version of the *Iliad*.

His lively humour was not merely awake to the impress of wry and risible comicalities, but was actively open to their appeal, ready to extract them perforce from the most unpromising materials or to inject them into what seemed altogether hopeless ones. This was one of his minor modes of using that imagination which he made such a central power in human nature. I remember with uncomfortable qualms how he one evening lured me into Boston to hear a certain Hiram Erastus Butler hold forth on I know not what subvariety of Oriental mysticism. The sage failed to turn up, but the audience, voluble as such exotic groups always are, grew vocal on its own account, and the air was soon thick with theosophy. One troubled soul, baffled by this display of intensive familiarity with the arcana of deity, blankly asked: "How do you people define God, anyway?" Such a lapse into the merely elementary instantly brought to their feet half a score of God-intoxicated adepts, open-mouthed and vociferous. Babbitt, with laughter shaking both his sides, nudged me in the ribs, and whispered (audibly, I fear): "Ten people who can define God!" His recurrent and violent relapses into laughter punctuated all the rest of the programme. Luckily the defining of God proved so absorbing that our indecorous behaviour did not entail expulsion from this paradise of mystics. The episode had a sequel. I can still recall Babbitt's ironic demeanour when next day he brought me a clipping from the morning *Herald*, which explained the absence of Hiram Erastus from the theosophic conciliabulum: he had decamped with the cash-box! I hope that I reminded Babbitt of his oft-repeated doctrine that mystics usually have a keen sense of the practical.

The situation repeated itself a few years later when we were in Paris together, and visited the oral examination of a brilliant young *agrégé*. His well-nigh perfect English accent made his few lapses only the more striking. In particular, he pronounced *all* as *ole*. "Anglo-Saxon," he recited, "has three genders: masculine for *ole* male beings, feminine for *ole* female beings, and neuter for *ole* things without any sex." It was an appropriate moment for observing Dante's precept, "*Guarda, e passa*". But Babbitt was at once convulsed with ill-suffocated laughter (not incommunicable), and regained his composure so intermittently and withal so unsuccessfully that our immunity from ejection can only be ascribed to French politeness. The frowning examiners (Beljame was one of them), in view of Babbitt's blond floridity, probably set us down, in this atmosphere of Anglo-Saxonism, as atavistic Anglo-Saxons, void of decorum and not amenable to discipline.

Babbitt was even capable (though not without a fair measure of provocation) of laughing at himself as well as at others. At one time he became interested in the genealogy of his family — the Earl of Shaftesbury was reputed to be in the ancestral line. Babbitt related with much hilarity how instead of such escutcheoned progenitors, he had traced a prosaic line of respectable burgesses, varied only by the unexpected apparition of the tragedienne Charlotte Cushman, of an early settler who had been killed by the Indians while hiding up a tree with his dog barking at the foot of it, and of yet another ancestor who was held up in his epitaph as a warning example of churlish miserliness. The genealogical researches were dropped at this point. But in general he was, like most of us, more ready to laugh at others — on occasion even at his own father, though this did not prevent him from endorsing Confucius on filial piety. When I mischievously contrasted his realistic judgements of human nature with his socialistic father's amiable *omnium gatherum* expansiveness, he undutifully remarked: "You can't size up these eupeptic lovers of mankind in this off-hand fashion — you should see my father working his way through the crowd to get a seat in the Elevated!" I never did; but I remember vividly how one evening Doctor Babbitt reported that he had just met a very remarkable man, a man with a very remarkable scheme — for doing away with money! "Bah! I've met a lot of men who know how to do away with money," rejoined his son dryly — and the conversation dried up too. If Babbitt ever dreamed of Utopias, it must have been in his cradle. He was, at the age of twenty, a realist of long standing.

This realism is the core of his thinking. Its whole aim is to lay bare the residue of truth essential to wise living from the parasitic growths under which the lust of knowledge, of power, and of sensation have hidden it. Only a deep and earnest nature with a fixed ethical centre illumined by the insight of genius could disengage and embody it in such monumental form. It is thus that he conceived life, and it is thus that he lived. His whole career is unified by this singleness of purpose. Despite his clear understanding of human nature and its always half-hearted response to such high summons, he fought off disillusion and discouragement and strove to the very end with splendid gallantry to impress his strenuous ideals on an Epicurean and sensation-hunting age. He was absorbed in his task to a rare point of self-forgetfulness. When I saw him for the last time, only a few weeks before his death, we had hardly been together a quarter-hour before he was extolling, with serene detachment from present circumstance, the luminous qualities of an article on Marcel Proust by the most intellectually sympathetic and the nearest to his heart of all his friends and companions in arms. And all around him on his bed lay the scattered blue-books and reports of his graduate students, which he made it a matter of professional honour to read, though he could do so only in broken snatches. To my remonstrances he characteristically replied: "When a man has been hired to do a job, it's only decent to stick to it to the end."

"My Public"

AUSTIN WARREN

THE young writer, like the young mechanic or the young banker, is likely to have been born in a village, or in suburbia. His first effusion, whether novel or epic, appears to him *sui generis*, and his "genius" marks him as apart from his fellows. He feels alone, "different", not understood, a freak and a sport amongst his relatives and his schoolmates. That he is or may be the voice of Gleasondale does not occur to him; he wants, so far as he is conscious of his environing society, to satirize or to censure it. The object of his desire for *expression* is *himself*, apprehended as the part of him which lies alien to the interests of other men, the part he does not share.

He writes for himself, condescending to read his product to a few sympathetic, middle-aged women who, themselves, have written verses, and who offer to his youth and temperament the homage he accepts as the due of his talent. Surreptitiously he sends his outpourings to the *Atlantic* or some equally impressive repository known to the teacher of English at his high school. It is returned, the world not yet being prepared for his work. He comforts himself: great poets must create the audiences which are to appreciate them; anyway (this, defiantly) I don't write for the *public* but for myself! Brave words but dishonest.

Translated to the university or to the city, he discovers himself not the unique being he had supposed. In the Writers' Club, at the "Y", on the Hill or in the Village, he finds other young men who had, similarly, thought of themselves as unique; who, similarly, instead of resorting to the novels and "snappy" magazines at the local drugstore, had purchased sophisticated volumes from the *Modern Library*. Perhaps amongst them, more fortunate than the rest by virtue of a plutocratic uncle, there is a youth who edits a "little magazine", of which Vol. I No. 1 (also the last) has just been inaugurated. Our young revolter from suburbia experiences a change of heart. He has lost his lofty isolation, the badge of his genius; but then he scarcely misses it, for he has found his Kind – others, a group even, who feel, as he does, that nothing else can possibly be so important as writing, and that, in consequence, the real heroes of the world are not Babe Ruth, Dr. Fosdick, Senator Borah, Professor Einstein but Pound, Eliot, Joyce, and whatever pontiffs of letters may be.

His new friends discuss, read, and even occasionally publish in magazines of which he had never so much as heard, but in which, so their editors proclaim, only "vital", creative", "experimental" work appears. The young man quickly apprehends the mode of the "vital", discovering, to his secret shame, that the original, self-expressive verses, penned at the family home in Gleasondale, had followed some *traditional* and out-moded style – that of Swinburne, say, or Edna St. Vincent Millay. He learns to compose more cryptic revelations. He begins to publish: that is, to give his works to a public, that inner circle composed of young editors and poorer young men who are only other writers. Probably there exist few readers who do not view themselves as potential creators, who have not thought occasionally — in this respect, at least, like Fenimore Cooper when he set about penning *Precaution* — that they could compose a novel as good as what they held in their hands: some of us have never "painted in oils", but we have all written. The "inner circle", however, professional in its aims if not in its attainment of recognition, comprises a vastly narrower group than that of the "general", "unanointed" perusers. Some of its members will later relinquish their ambitions and subside into salesmen or, with less violence, professors; but some, also, will persist; and, having won the "private public", they will, while still asserting that only the opinion of the élite can possibly matter, extend hands, and manuscripts, to the publishers and editors who purvey to the real public, the public which buys autographed books and tickets to Hugh Walpole's lectures and which writes fan mail to Branch Cabell.

The young writer — let us spare him embittering delay in recognition — wins for his poems, or his novel, the imprint of a New York publisher. A cocktail party celebrates his début. The New York *Times* awards him space and a photograph; the weeklies assign him to the appropriate literary "school" or economic "class"; Brentano's allots him a window; the *Transcript*, printing an interview with him, acquaints its readers with his rise from Gleasondale, his way of emerging from a chair and flicking a cigarette, describes his home life, reports his views on Willa Cather and the next War.

Heartened, he prepares a second manuscript, for which his publishers profess eagerness. He would like to venture a new form or a different subject. But is that safe? I go into the bookshop five days before Christmas to buy a present for Uncle Seth; yearly I ask for Joseph C. Lincoln's latest novel, confident that he has written another, and, without examining it, that its setting remains Cape Cod, that its ingredients persist the familiar ones. How tricked should I feel if Mr. Lincoln had suddenly turned psychoanalytic or Marxian, served up not Yankees but miners or neurotics. Is the case, really, so different with authors more palpably literary? The sense of what "my public" expects is as strong with most men of letters as with John McCormack or Roland Hayes.

Here, having "safely" conducted our young writer through his first success and having forecast his probable future, we may leave him; but the implicit and commonplace moral of the fable reads: authors emerge from a family and a fortuitous family *milieu*; they proceed to other social contexts evoked by their temperaments and tastes; their "life-philosophy", whether orthodox or individualist, is social in its reference (the man who hates mankind is not delivered from concern with "society", for it is the object of his hatred); they write for a public, restricted or catholic, actual or envisaged as a more discerning posterity; once they have found readers, their audience at once heartens and hampers them.

Doubtless some men there are who write solely to sharpen their thoughts, discharge their socially inacceptable moods, or fasten, for their own future needs, the fugitive recollection of things past; but such are, assuredly, few, and when a man tells us that he indites merely to express himself and not in the least to be read by others we may generally set him down as either an hypocrite or the dupe of his own pride. The primary and well-nigh universal motive of literature, as of speech, is communication.

Even, however, if we add: "Yes, but it is a communication of the self", we are still undelivered from society, for only in the abstract are these two perfectly discrete. In practice, the particular self mirrors, exemplifies, corresponds to a smaller or a larger group; and the value of the author, as criticism appraises it, resides, eminently, in this typicality. In articulating himself, the author articulates an inarticulate group. Have we not all known those who, though themselves voiceless, had the temperament and the temper of Fielding, of Jane Austen, of Meredith, of Johnson, of Pater, of Proust? Some writers bespeak a social class, some a generation, some a recurrent life-attitude. The greatest transcend these particularities of representation; we can say only that they are men, and that nothing human seems alien to natures so comprehensive.

The phoenix, were it a poet, could rhapsodize confident that the self it had to express would be not only "original" but literally unique; but then the boon were a dubious one, for, as the experience of what it is like to be a phoenix would be unintelligible to all other creatures, its odes would want for an audience. In Shakespeare we have the opposite of the fabled bird: the universal spokesman. There are times when we cannot distend ourselves to the ample dimensions of our Adam, when we sink back, with relief, to the little authors who, "good in kind", articulate not our humanity but our own generation, class, temperament – as the sensitively intelligent but indecisive reader reaches for his Amiel. At such times it is not "Culture" which most sharply rebukes us; rather, it is our consciousness that our restricted, our private self has conquered, that our ease is being taken in a parochial Zion.

Ultimately our judgement of a book is a judgement of the self we apprehend through it, and the quality and scope of that self. The more horizontally and vertically representative that self is, the larger and deeper and greater the book.

Neither in fable nor in homily have I wandered beyond reach of my text. Albert Guérard has just published a volume* on the mutual relations of literature and society: literature in its exclusive sense of *belles lettres*, society in the amplest of connotations. French by birth and education, Guérard has lived in these States, of which he is now a hopeful citizen, for more than twenty-five years. By trade a professor, he is obviously, in addition, a man of the world: he has read widely and remembers what he has read; he has also known and relished men. An earlier book of his, *The Life and Death of an Ideal*, a study of French civilization in the classical age, humanized knowledge in masterly fashion, meriting, as a model of neat organization, lucid and urbane exposition, and clarity of intelligence the praise he therein bestows upon the work of Fontenelle.

His recent volume, *Literature and Society*, shows him still in retention of many virtues which, justly, we associate with the French. Its manner lacks the dignity and poise of the earlier work. Guérard, unlike many of our native academics, can write; he has a gift for phrase-making, and obviously relishes taking his pen in hand. But, if I may "explain" him in terms of his environment, his sojourn in California has been somewhat deleterious. Though he seems unconverted to its climate – "I would not", he says, "endorse the claims of San Diego, where they play the organ outdoors every day in the year, or those of Yuma, Arizona, where they offer you a free lunch every day the sun does not shine" – he has acquired a certain forced and over-persistent sprightliness which captivates for a dozen pages at a time but irks upon protracted acquaintance. He has become too eager not to bore his audience of co-eds, too conscious that his lecture must deftly mix its ingredients of humour, witticism, anecdote, local allusion, patriotic attestation, personal whimsy, information, generalization. The resultant cocktail proves a shade too smooth in its blend.

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* LITERATURE AND SOCIETY *by Albert Guérard* (LOTHROP, LEE & SHEPARD. 451 pp. $3.00).

In point of view Guérard has the combined detachment of a professor and of a man of the world, both of a somewhat old-fashioned vintage. His favourites stem from 1914 or thereabouts – Mencken, Cabell, George Jean Nathan; amongst the French, Voltaire, Renan, Anatole France; amongst the English, Pater; amongst the philosophers, Bergson. With later "schools" he has "kept up": he has read Babbitt and Eliot, Calverton and Hicks, and genially bears no grudge against either Marxism or Humanism. Of the economic interpreters he writes: "Any new method is at any rate a challenge. It goes through our critical lumber room like a devastating housemaid, with powerful Scandinavian arms and a purpose inscrutable to man"; and of 1930's controversy: "America would never have listened to the muffled echo of very ancient discussions, if these had not been offered as 'the New Humanism', with a first-class staff, resounding manifestoes, symposia for and against. And we must surmise that it is better for a few thousand Americans to talk about Humanism than about the antics of some picturesque Mayor, Governor, or Evangelist." In other words, Guérard finds mild intellectual titillation in critical theories as he finds a heartier kind of amusement in the home-brewed religions of Southern California; but it has never occurred to him to take them, or any critico-philosophical theory, in "real" earnest. He is palpably and astoundingly not *crisis-conscious*, seems emotionally unaware of collapsing and ascending polities in Europe, and of American upheavals seems even ignorant. The American mentality still, for him, "keeps cool with Coolidge"; of newer, "puzzled America" he knows nothing.

The defects and the merits of Guérard's book proceed from this detachment, this scepticism of critical attitudes and philosophies. The author surveys a vast terrain: the influence on literature of race, climate, economic and social class, nationality, age; the natural history, physiological, sociological, psychological, of writers; the "enigma of genius"; the influence of universities, academies, courts, salons, "schools"; the business of publishing; the place and the importance of magazines. He ends with three chapters of clever, good-humoured, sanguine prophecy. Of the relations between *literature* and *society*, he holds no central theory. After surveying other men's doctrines, he concludes: "Determinism may be true in the abstract: that is no concern of ours. . . . The scientific definiteness of Taine and his successors is a delusion. We felt from the beginning that there was 'something' to race, environment, and time. After this survey, we still feel that there is 'something' to them: how much, we do not know." A sensible deduction. Indeed, "common sense" is Guérard's instrument and badge. In expository method French, in turn of mind he is English or American: no Procrustean bed his. There is "something" to everything – except metaphysics and dogma. Whatever can be discerned without laborious research or deep and persistent intellection Guérard can tell us; his eyes are natively keen: he is neither pedant nor fool.

His virtues show at their best in Part II, *Homo Scriptor: the Author as a Social Type*. On particular points, he is sometimes definite, as in his refutation of Galton's "hereditary genius" or his remarks on infant prodigies. Always he is shrewd and "sensible". Of the author's maintenance, for example, he writes: "There are men of genius who can not sell their wares, or who scorn to do so, or who have none to sell: our advice to them would be, not to seek a patron, but to adopt a simple mode of life, work for it, and write in their spare time. . . . An outdoor occupation, not too strenuous, would be ideal. The pastoral tradition might be revived. A forest ranger, a rural mail carrier, have matchless opportunities for poetry. So has a policeman, on a safe beat." The ablest thinking in the book will be found in Chapter 21, *Influence of Literature upon Life*.

In "Grapholis", Guérard agreeably conjures up the writer's Utopia — which appears to be also his own, so far as he feels any slight desire to remould what seems to him, after all, a pretty comfortable old world — which bears some small resemblance to that "better world" anticipated by the essayists of THE AMERICAN REVIEW. "Grapholis is not a vast empire. A huge country is slow-witted. . . . How much more favourable is the city-state, Athens, or Florence, or the tiny principality, like Weimar! . . . Culturally, vast entities are barren. The formula of the future is communalism as in 1871 — a world federation of independent cities." The postulated country "is not predominantly industrial". Its citizens ply the arts and the crafts; they are leisurely in their movements, conversationally gifted, fond of sidewalk cafés. The "enormous majority" of them "belong, broadly, to the same race; and that race, needless to say, is our own. Asia and Africa each have their Grapholis, friendly and independent". These happy people are not polyglots. For business, science, and international relations they employ a simple, artificial language, but their own is a "sonorous, highly inflected, strongly accented language, full of idioms, allusive phrases, veiled metaphors. . . . They rejoice in the possession of many dialects and forms of slang, closely related enough to remain mutually intelligible, but different enough to give a racier tang to any man's speech." The social classes are "definite enough: a man knows without a doubt whether he belongs to the upper middle class or the lower nobility; but interpenetration is not absolutely barred". A significant differentia, however, exists between the Guérardian-Cabellian paradise and such as more earnest men would postulate: the dwellers in Grapholis have no philosophical *point de repère*, no "first principles"; they are romantics for whom a sufficient criterion of polities and faiths is picturesqueness.

In short, this is scarcely a book for the "thinker". It neither tells us what we did not know nor introduces a new method of socio-literary analysis nor applies, with superior consistency and penetration, one already familiar. Rather, it is, in the best sense, addressed *ad populum*. Easily, genially, cleverly, it introduces, to what should be a large and gratified public, a range of important problems and offers, toward their solution, whatever "common sense" can dictate; and for the young writer, at Gleasondale or at Columbia, it should prove a painless initiation.

REVIEWS

A Witness for the Government*

WHAT a relief to read a really good book on politics! Even to disagree with Mr. Nock, to the small extent that is necessary, is a pleasure. His writing is lucid with the lucidity of thought long ripened in a rich and powerful intellect. One knows where one stands with him, and where he stands; one feels any expression of difference would be understood. There is freedom from the maddening sensation of battling through clouds of solid smoke experienced when trying to make contact with the minds that produce the current political fare: the Marxian fanatics, the liberal and New Deal sentimentalists, the mess-of-pottage economists who babble of plenty-leisure-security, the Liberty Leaguers, guardians of the Constitution, and old-fashioned Jeffersonian Republicans.

But it is frivolous to compare Albert Jay Nock with writers who have nothing in common with him but subject-matter. And equally frivolous to dwell on matters of style and tone when the substance is so important. In *Our Enemy, the State* Mr. Nock has written one of the most penetrating and eloquent treatises on public affairs ever produced in this country. Its sustained, undeviating, uncompromising onslaught on the main drift of our time is nothing less than a feat of intellectual heroism, which may have to wait years or generations to be appreciated.

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* OUR ENEMY, THE STATE *by Albert Jay Nock* (MORROW. 209 pp. $2.25).

For Mr. Nock is, with Ralph Adams Cram and Bouck White, one of the few rebels of the older generation who long ago found the right enemy: who were not deceived by the surface dissimilarity of plutocracy and collectivism: who have hated and fought the Monster State, under whatever name: and have dreamt of the Human State, if it might be achieved—or restored, as Mr. Cram would say. It is of inestimable value that the meagre literature of this up-hill battle has been enriched by Mr. Nock's rounded statement of the political philosophy which illumined his *Freeman*, and which has hitherto found its fullest expression in certain chapters of his book *Jefferson* (1926).

In a footnote Mr. Nock remarks:

> It seems a most discreditable thing that this century has not seen produced in America an intellectually respectable presentation of the complete case against the State's progressive confiscations of social power; a presentation, that is, which bears the mark of having sound history and a sound philosophy behind it. Mere interested touting of "rugged individualism" and agonized fustian about the Constitution are so specious, so frankly unscrupulous, that they have become contemptible. Consequently collectivism has easily had all the best of it, intellectually, and the results are now apparent.

Mr. Nock would doubtless reject any suggestion that his small book fills the need he names. But pending the arrival of the completer document *Our Enemy, the State* will serve brilliantly.

I used, above, the word "State" in a way that Mr. Nock would not allow. The framework of his book is a sharp distinction which—preferring, surprisingly, Gumplowicz and Oppenheimer (whom he calls "Galileos" of political thought) to Aristotle and his beloved "Mr. Jefferson"—he makes between *the State* and *government.* "The State invariably had its origin in conquest and confiscation. . . . The sole invariable characteristic of the State is the economic exploitation of one class by another." Government, on the other hand, "contemplates no positive intervention upon the individual, but only a negative intervention. . . . Government implements the common desire of society, first, for freedom, and second, for security."

This formulation apparently aided Mr. Nock in crystallizing his political philosophy, and in turn it serves him very well in conveying it. But surely it is arguable whether this terminology—like so many of the dichotomies one meets in disputation—is not rather a rhetorical device than a piece of ultimate analysis. In any case the point is not vital. If one prefers traditional usage—and is willing to brave Mr. Nock's insistence that the difference he points out "is not one of degree, but of kind", and "is now probably the most important duty that civilization owes to its own safety"—it is perfectly easy to read his terms as "good government" and "bad government", or "the good State" and "the bad State".

It does injustice to Mr. Nock's book to attempt to state its thesis or criticize its terminology, since its great merit lies primarily in the profound insight the author brings to the discussion of concrete individuals, situations, periods, events, pronouncements. Moved by detestation of what has been happening to society and is now happening at vastly accelerated pace, he ranges back and forth over modern history showing how greed and aggression have operated through the misuse of governmental powers, pointing out the tricks, the blunders, the blind impulses whereby men come to be expropriated and exploited by other men through the very instrument that should keep them free and secure.

There is a valuable chapter on the European background of the Colonists and the colonial period in this country, coming to the conclusion, extreme-sounding but well supported, "The Colonists regarded the State as primarily an instrument whereby one might help oneself and hurt others. . . . No other view of the State was ever held in colonial America". Incidentally, Mr. Nock's State is not usually an "instrument", but more like an independent entity engaged in destroying men. The near-personification is so frequent as to suggest a reluctance to blame evil on evil men.

Another chapter deals with the pervasive "land-grab" aspect of our early history. Mr. Nock here dwells on the probable influence of the itch for land-profits in causing the Revolution of 1776; in reaction to the British ban on taking up the western lands. The chapter in which Mr. Nock discusses the framing of the Constitution and the rise of the "party system" affords him his best opportunity for explaining, and damning, the tendencies of today in terms of our national origins. Abundant footnotes throughout the book touch on current events in a most devastating and illuminating fashion. The book is largely historical only because, from Mr. Nock's point of view, our history has been all of a piece, and the early period allows us to gain perspective on the whole picture.

Properly to criticize *Our Enemy, the State* would require a book of similar size. There seemed to the present reviewer, for one thing, an insufficient awareness, in Mr. Nock's analysis, of the economic and political doctrines of the Middle Ages. In his historical sketch he jumps from feudalism and serfs to the Merchant-State and proletarians. This is of course to skip a crucial period of some two centuries, when the feudal state was everywhere giving way to the state of independent owners which Mr. Belloc has named the Proprietary State. In one place Mr. Nock actually uses "serf" and "peasant" as synonyms.

In the field of politics, Mr. Nock expresses a strong aversion to "personal government", suggesting the question what theories of monarchy he has given serious attention to. He seems to associate personal government with absolutism and tyranny. From his references to the "divine right of kings" one would not be sure he knew this was a post-Reformation innovation quite alien to the mediaeval conception.

It is possibly the absence of these factors in Mr. Nock's field of interest that accounts for his utter pessimism about the future. In his search for examples of good government according to his definitions Mr. Nock is able to name only some Indian hunting tribes, the Hottentots and other African natives, and some unlocated "primitive peasants". Even passably good government is indeed rare; but this extreme rarity will doubtless suggest to not a few readers that there may be something incomplete about Mr. Nock's analysis. Part of the total effect left by the book is of a temperamental leaning toward anarchism; resulting in a greater satisfaction with the negative than with the positive contribution made. But it is a great deal, in this day, to have written a book worthy to stand beside Kropotkin's *Fields, Factories, and Workshops.* These books will be foundation-stones in the edifice of the future.

S. C.

A Contrast in Novels*

WITHIN the past weeks two books have been issued by American publishers which, in respect to each other, are at the antipodes. Each is slightly longer than three hundred pages, each is published to sell for $2.50, each would necessarily be classified as light fiction, and each will surprise the average American reader, at least momentarily, by showing him men and women living by standards which are not his. Here the similarity ends; for those who read Margery Sharp's third novel, *Four Gardens,* will find that behind her English emphasis on class-distinctions which we commonly ignore she is telling a story which is universally true, which is warm, generous, tender, and funny. Those who read *Butterfield 8* will find themselves having the reverse of this experience: behind the superficial manners and dialogue which Mr. O'Hara puts down with a savage reportorial exactness, and which, when it is not outright offensive, will please all those who must have the "joy of recognition" from their reading, is a story bitter, sharp, gross,

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*FOUR GARDENS *by Margery Sharp* (PUTNAM. 307 pp. $2.50).
BUTTERFIELD 8 *by John O'Hara* (HARCOURT, BRACE. 310 pp. $2.50).

viciously filthy, and witty – with the kind of "wit" which the late mayor of New York had in such abundance, little more than putting the commonplace somewhat unexpectedly, and with a rhythm still preserving a trace of the amusing inversions of brogue. There is no universal truth in Mr. O'Hara's tale. He has, thank God, told as untypical a story of a girl of twenty-two as he could have hit on. But that it has many points of identity with the sordid story of a young girl who was found in the water near New York some years ago, and whose "murder" was a nine-days' sensation for the tabloid press, undoubtedly leads Mr. O'Hara and his admiring public into the mistake of thinking his story is typical, and so fulfills one of the primary demands of art.

This journal is intended to go into homes and schools, so it is not desirable to give too detailed a sketch of the story Mr. O'Hara has thought worth his time, energy, and reputation. But in short it is the recounting of the last few days in the life of a young girl who "became one of the world's heaviest drinkers in the years between 1927 and 1930", who was corrupted in her late childhood and was always thereafter promiscuous, who was a thief and ready liar. In the end she dies in an accident as pointless and cruel as her life or this story of it, with Mr. O'Hara going through with the nauseating report of it to its last detail.

It is depressing to think that this book has already received enough acclaim from the press to insure its penetrating every nook and corner of the country. No one can come from its reading without being a little brutalized by the experience. It will carry corruption into all sorts of homes. Under a sound government the book would simply disappear, but even an attempt to suppress it by censorship, as things stand today, would play into the hands of the enemy. A hundred liberal lawyers would leap to defend it, its oppressors would be excoriated as prudes, shrieks about the freedom of the press would rend the firmament, and the book would sail into its tenth large printing on the blast of invective. A church might once have helped Mr. O'Hara past his period of obscenity; today presumably the only restraint upon him is that the young reviewers of the "Left" do not see any unmistakable social purpose in his sordid document. Even this is faint comfort, for many of them hold that he has unintentionally provided the Party with a precious case record, a proof that something is exceedingly rotten – not in the unregenerated human heart, of course, but in New York as it is today.

Since it is impossible to quote ten consecutive lines from *Butterfield 8* without radical deleting of obscenity or insane cruelty, the case will have to go by default. Perhaps it is enough to point out that Mr. O'Hara has come so far from the standards of the Isle of the Saints and of this less saintly country, has so broken with his racial tradition, and has gone out for the redefining of established words to such an extent that he writes of a girl who has had only one lover, and looks forward to having no more, as a virgin.

Miss Sharp, this time, tells the story of a happy marriage. The heroine of it, when we first meet her, is middle-aged and contented. Once she had a few days' idyllic romance, innocent and glamorous, with a young man "much above her station". But then he meets his lovely girl's coarse and hearty cousin, and the tenuous affair is over. Without moping or repining, she marries a kind young man of her own station. She is affectionate, loyal, gentle, and she has the greatest of all rewards. Her marriage becomes a true marriage, although Henry never grows articulate or demonstrative. He loves her and trusts her, she is the core of his life and knows it, as he is of hers. They live happily and contentedly together, and as her husband's genius for making money grows, they move up in their little world without ever losing their integrity or self-respect. In each phase of her life, this heroine tends a garden; first a romantic garden around a ruinous manor which is not truly her own, then a tiny suburban back-yard, then the formal garden in which she is always, somehow, a stranger, and finally, when her husband's unhealthily expanded business has collapsed and she is left a widow with a very small income (from an old man to whom she was casually kind), she is once more making her garden, this time on the roof of her small flat. Her children, who for a time seemed alien to her, are returned to her in their maturity: they had lived too long with kindness and responsibility and loyalty ever to be satisfied in any other atmosphere.

Once again Miss Sharp has written a book whose main character is truly entitled to the name of "heroine". In many ways the book will not appeal to younger readers quite so directly as *The Flowering Thorn*, but I cannot imagine a woman over the age of twenty-five who would not like all, or a large part, or this book. The humour is particularly feminine: sly without malice, emerging even in moments of strain.

Miss Sharp inscribes a motto in her book, immediately following the title page, a motto from Jane Austen which inspires so much hope, which so nearly promises more books of this same standard, that this reviewer very nearly went out and cabled the author in fervent gratitude:

"Let other pens," she quotes, "dwell on guilt and misery."

MIRIAM COLGATE

Conduct and the Law*

THE problem of the ethical valuation of civil law is perennial in the philosophies of the West. The Greeks analyzed the concept of justice. Roman and mediaeval jurists discussed natural law and equity. Moderns are concerned with what they variously call natural rights or social interests. But beneath all the changing terminologies the problem remains the same: what are the ultimately valid norms of legal criticism and what is the final determination of the general end of civil law? To this problem Dr. Cohen addresses himself in the book under review.

At the very outset he is confronted by the fact that our modern philosophers of ethics "have abandoned the sovereignty which Greek and mediaeval moralists once exercised over the really important realms of human conduct, the realms of art, thought, industry, the distribution of economic and political power, friendship, and war". In consequence of this surrender, morality no longer holds sway over the domain of law's activities. The law today owns allegiance only to itself, he says, and there is no authority beyond its own hallowed past to which it will look when society charges it with the task of revising an industrial system or of solving new problems in social relations. In other words, the modern jurist takes law as the standard for evaluating law, and logical harmonies within the legal system become the norms of criticism which were once provided by a universal moral science.

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* ETHICAL SYSTEMS AND LEGAL IDEALS *by Felix S. Cohen.* (HARCOURT, BRACE. 303 pp. $2.50).

Believing that there is no way of avoiding the ultimate responsibility of law to ethics, our author starts with the principle: the law ought to bring about as much good as it can. From this he proceeds to formulate his set of definitions. He defines *law* as "a body of rules according to which the courts, that is the judicial organs of a political body, decide cases". By the term *ethics* he means "the science of the significance and application of judgments of *good*, *bad*, *right*, *wrong*, *better*, *worse*, *best*, *worst*, *ought*, and their derivatives, in so far as these terms are applied categorically". On the postulate that law has instrumental value in so far as it promotes the good life, he tells us that *the good life* is simply a concept common, though applying in various degrees, to all lives worth living.

But the definition of *the good* eludes him. In a lengthy chapter which begins on the Aristotelian note that "in the end our ethical judgments will not be infallible, [for] human certainty in material realms is never perfect", he devotes a very earnest effort to discover some satisfactory evaluation of the concept of intrinsic goodness. He takes as his starting-point "the non-verbal agreement of men as to the content of the good life", and seeks to refine this general moral opinion in the direction of an ultimate criterion of ethics. Devoting his attention mainly to hedonism and ethical relativism, the two systems with which he seems to be most familiar, he comes to the conclusion that, despite the fallacies inherent in each system, either of them must be accepted.

> We have come upon two theories of ethics which appear equally valid. On the one hand, there is the theory that intrinsic goodness is relative, definable, and identical with a relation to an approving individual. On the other hand, there is the theory that intrinsic goodness is absolute, indefinable, and equivalent in application to positive pleasantness. Between these incompatible alternatives we have discovered no rational basis of choice. It is in the shadow of these doubts that our legal philosophy must make its very beginning. The conclusion is not a pleasant one.

In the end he decides that the standard of the good life is most adequately formulated by the theory of hedonism. As for ethical relativism, he finds that there is room in it for a hedonistic ethics, at least in so far as a personal standard is concerned. The political task of hedonism is quite plain to him: in thought, it must translate the books of the law into the universal language of human joys and sufferings, and in practice it must struggle for the attainment of ideals thus discovered. Here the ethics culminates, he says, and the task of positive legal science begins.

That task he sees as the effort to link the ceremonial show of the legal process with the joys and sufferings of sentient beings, and he discusses it from the Benthamite angle in his chapter on law in life. In this chapter he objects to the traditional division of human life into an internal domain in which morality is to be the supreme guide, and an external domain which is the proper field of law. "This division rests upon an unfortunate confusion between the direct subject matter of legal rules and the ultimate human significance of these rules." Our author's rejection of the classical dichotomy becomes intelligible when it is remembered that his postulate is that happiness is the ideal object of law and that no problem of legal criticism can be carried to its conclusion without an appreciation of the topography of pleasures and pains.

Criticism of the book must come from two angles. In the first place, the volume is a triumph of destructive analysis of the current standards of legal criticism, and the author does a clean, neat dissection of many abstractions in legal philosophy. The fashionable valuations of civil law in terms of aesthetics (*elegantia juris*), of the immediate content of legal decrees, of the law's immediate purpose, of peace, liberty, social interests, and natural law are all rejected in favor of the concept of the good life, which he finds to be "a necessary as well as a sufficient ethical basis for the valuation of law".

But the constructive side of the book leaves much to be desired, for the author fails to formulate a principle of legal criticism which will stand the test of philosophical analysis. He is quite conscious of this failure and accepts it as one of the limitations of the human search for ultimates. Certainly the link between law and ethics must be forged of far stronger elements than those indicated by such a loose principle as that "the law ought to bring about as much good as it can".

Dr. Cohen's use of this principle seems to manifest a confusion between the essence of law and the effects of law. Law in its essence is a rule or measure of acts, whereby man is induced to act or restrained from acting; it is therefore, in all its forms, a dictate of the practical reason. What law actually does, or rather what it should do, is something quite distinct. Every law aims at being obeyed by those to whom it is given, and consequently the proper effect of law is to make those who are subject to it good and virtuous, either simply or in some special respect. It is with this thought in mind that Aristotle writes in the second book of the *Politics* that lawgivers make men good by habituating them to good deeds.

Our author is in good company when he discusses the problem of the good life. Two thousand years ago the Greeks were discussing it. Pythagoras gave rules for living which range from an insistence on loyal friendship to a command not to sit with the legs crossed. Socrates discoursed on justice, and Plato speculated on the nature of the Good. Aristotle, starting from the purpose or function of man, developed a teleological system in his effort to answer the question: what kind of life is the best for man to live?

Aristotle's solution of the problem is based upon an analysis of man's nature; he is concerned primarily with what man is, not with what man does. He finds that man has certain instincts, faculties, urges, longings, desires, appetites, and therewith he builds up his great ethical theory of the good life. Dr. Cohen, on the other hand, approaches the problem from the angle of what man does, and seeks to refine a vague moral concept in the direction of a solid ethical principle. In this he is typically modern, for it is the modern claim that the nature or essence of things is unknowable, that man needs no knowledge in excess of his power, that the subjugation of nature for our utilization, and not its contemplation for the satisfaction of our desire to know, is the ultimate aim in human life.

A final criticism may be made as to the author's view of the relation of ethics to law. Ethics, the science of human conduct, is divided, in the *philosophia perennis*, into general ethics, which is concerned with the principles that affect man in his individual life, and special ethics, which is the application of these principles and their extension to the various social relationships in which the individual man has to live. Law is one of the subjects with which special ethics deals, for it is one part of the mechanism which man has devised to ensure peace and harmony in social life. Its purpose is the security, peace, and well-being of the citizens in their relations with each other. It is concerned with the externals of life in society. It has no immediate interest in the thoughts or ideals of its subjects. *De internis non judicat lex.* It is only when those thoughts or ideals are manifested by some overt word or act that the civil law may claim jurisdiction over them. It seems, therefore, that Dr. Cohen forces the issue somewhat when he discusses categories of thought and human desires in his otherwise delightful chapter on the human value of the law.

The main value of the book is that it recognizes the need of a reasoned philosophical basis for legal criticism. Whatever hostages it may have given to criticism, it has the merit of clearly and avowedly subordinating jurisprudence to ethics and of attempting to apply a simple theory of the good as the touchstone of all legal relations.

CHAS. F. RONAYNE

Plays by Eliot and Auden*

THE poetry of T. S. Eliot, Wyndham Lewis has somewhere said, has been like a small particle of musk which scents an entire room; small in bulk, it has given its tone to the verse of a whole generation. Mr. Eliot's criticism has elucidated his poetry and made for its acceptance; it has laid down principles or pointed out characteristics in works of the past which might be discerned in his own work, and while there are those who applaud Mr. Eliot's verse and condemn his criticism, and a smaller number who do the converse, in general it can be said that once Mr. Eliot's critical theories are subscribed to his verse is found to be rich in the elements that have marked the great poetry of every age. For not only is there homogeneity in Mr. Eliot's writing, but he is also conscious of the impulses and needs that underlie his work – a consciousness that is not manifest in a great deal of modern writing, which is often the product of superficially conflicting tendencies resulting from unexamined and invalid assumptions. Much that his contemporaries and juniors have taken over from Mr. Eliot's work is not his most profound. In his recent book on Paul Elmer More,

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* MURDER IN THE CATHEDRAL *by T. S. Eliot* (HARCOURT, BRACE. 87 pp. $1.25).
THE DOG BENEATH THE SKIN *by W. H. Auden and Christopher Isherwood* (RANDOM HOUSE. 161 pp. $1.50).

Robert Shafer has called Mr. Eliot a purely aesthetic critic. This statement denies the best that is in the man's writing, but it does serve to underscore a significance that he holds for a large portion of his public. It is a significance, one might say, imposed on him rather than implicit in his work: the age has taken from his books what it has brought to them, or, more exactly, it has taken from them a technique for expressing the mood in which it has gone to them.

At the moment of writing, rats stirring the dust in garrets, middle-aged men with regrets for never having brought desire to act, and frameworks drawn from the researches of anthropologists are less common in poetry than they were five years ago: the conventional properties of today are more often aeroplanes, ardent Communists, and plans of military campaign. But the cadences, the dramatic presentation, and the irony peculiar to Mr. Eliot still remain; the change has not been essential and has only been toward those fashionable tropes by which the "living" poetry of the moment is recognized. That the change Mr. Eliot himself has wrought is essential holds true in only a few cases; a great part of the poetry written under his influence (a man's influence and his meaning do not always coincide) would not be inappropriately garbed in the language of Swinburne, if less smartly. No one could say that this limited influence has not meant a change for the better along technical lines. And it points to an enlightening inconsistency in modern thought: that Mr. Eliot engages respectful attention when he speaks on the narrower aspects of his craft but is mocked when he speaks on the broader matters all poets must still consider.

Hitherto Mr. Eliot has used his technical resources in the service of tension and compactness; *The Waste Land*, which is ranked as a "long poem", is about the length of *Lycidas.* A loosening of technique was discernible in his pageant play of last year, *The Rock*, and has been carried to further length in this year's play, *Murder in the Cathedral.* Loosening of technique is not meant in any invidious sense; it is not discipline and care that have been relaxed but lyric intensity. Mr. Eliot has, so to speak, limited his poetic vision to the immediate materials of his drama, and this allows him to support it with less strain. Such a move seems to be in the right direction, for a play, even a poetic drama, if it is meant for production, cannot be accorded the same attention and study as a poem, designed to be read, and the ear must be enabled to take in a great deal of it at a single hearing. Style and substance, Charles Maurras has said, are one; but the surface simplicity of *Murder in the Cathedral* does not mean that its subject is a shallow one, for true simplicity is only attained when many complexities have been considered and what is non-essential and what is abiding in them have been decided.

The murder of the play's title is the murder of Thomas Becket. The actual character of the historical Becket and the political forces that brought about his assassination are not Mr. Eliot's primary subject-matter. He is concerned with an issue of more fundamental character, and it is an issue intrinsically dramatic. Despite Mr. Day Lewis's assertion that literature must become more concerned with the relations between classes and less with the relations between individuals, the greatest drama always has been, and always will be, concerned with the individual, for the individual is the unit from which life takes meaning: he is the centre to which relates the intelligibility of the universe. For the purposes of action, the dramatic conflict in the individual must be with other individuals, but in so far as that conflict has meaning it is less a matter of the relation of man to man and more a matter of man's relation to things beyond him. Thus what moves us most in the drama of Oedipus is not his relations with Jocasta or the people of Thebes but with something less easily named; Hamlet's questions are not to be answered by Gertrude or Ophelia, since in the end they reduce to the question of "to be or not to be" and the manner of that being. And Thomas's concern is as to what his aspiration to goodness will actually be in God's sight; he finds the way to holiness no more easy in being chosen than in being traversed:

The last temptation is the greatest treason:
To do the right deed for the wrong reason. . . .
Ambition comes when early force is spent
And when we find no longer all things possible
Ambition comes behind and unobservable.
Sin grows with doing good. . . .
Servant of God has chance of greater sin
And sorrow, than the man who serves a king.

This is fundamental because it asks: Do we do good for good's sake? It is dramatic because it uncovers a conflict within the individual himself and an outcome of his nature.

Whether or not Thomas's choice of martyrdom is noble Mr. Eliot does not say. But such a judgement is perhaps one that we cannot ask any dramatist to make; he cannot speak with the finality of the casuist or he will seem to have stacked the cards against his character, whatever his decision. However, a dramatist cannot write at his most effective if he assumes that the moral worth of the actions he depicts is a small matter; for the moral worth of action is its human worth, and without recognition of this a drama is merely a spectacle of variously amusing puppets. Mr. Eliot's religious sense has greatly aided him here. Religion teaches a distinction between right and wrong, between good and evil, and makes the knowledge of this distinction essential to salvation, so that the concern with right and wrong goes beyond a mere interest in personal happiness. The awareness of this distinction, and the fact that it is a real one, illuminates *Murder in the Cathedral* and gives a sweep and grandeur to Thomas's struggles which show them to be as central in our day as they were in his own. For Thomas, as a person, confronts something more than personal and proves that men do not dwell forever "each in his prison". This is made possible through the reality which evil is given in these pages; the struggle is not with an illusion engendered in the self but with an actual exterior force:

I have seen
Rings of light coiling downwards, leading
To the horror of the ape. Have I not known, not known
What was coming to be? It was here in the kitchen, in the passage,
In the mews in the barn in the byre in the market place
In our veins our bowels our skulls as well
As in the plottings of potentates. . . .
What is woven on the loom of fate . . .
Is woven like a pattern of living worms
In the guts of the women of Canterbury.

Sometimes, it must be said, Thomas's problem seems more real than Thomas himself and the people who surround him – the characters become convenient abstractions and the play loses in dramatic quality, its story told more through the ruminations of its author than through the actions of its characters. This is surprising in Mr. Eliot, who has showed a high talent for dramatic presentation even in his lyric pieces. One might also complain of the low key of the verse and its eschewal of rich metaphor. Here Mr. Eliot may be striving for an exclusive concentration on what he sees as the main imports of his drama, but the result now and again has the appearance of thinness rather than austerity. Remembering that Mr. Eliot has said that Shakespeare reached his most poetic in his most dramatic, it does not seem consistent of him to have come so close to using a prose tempo. But these are not judgements on the play as a whole.

The debt of W. H. Auden to Mr. Eliot must be a considerable one. A learned critic has recently pointed out in an English review that Mr. Auden transposes certain lines of the older poet for the richness of their associations, just as Mr. Eliot transposes the lines of poets earlier still. In *The Dog Beneath the Skin* Mr. Auden does not repay the debt very adequately. (The play is written in collaboration with the novelist Christopher Isherwood, but it has the characteristics of other work to which only Mr. Auden's name has been appended.) Its scene is not the twelfth century but the twentieth, and it is intended as a commentary on that century. One immediate result of this is that when Mr. Auden is compared with Mr. Eliot he appears more in touch with the times; in his play one meets

Communism and Fascism and the imminence of a capitalist war, while Mr. Eliot only offers kings, barons, and martyrs. This is not an impression that can endure long; for Mr. Auden is not only less of a poet than Mr. Eliot, he is also less alive. Awareness of the facts of the moment can be accompanied by ignorance of the more lasting facts which explain them, and the realist with a quick eye for surface details may know nothing of reality. What strikes one most about *The Dog Beneath the Skin* is its shallowness. All, it says, is not for the best in our world, and we may agree; but the diagnosis comes from no clear perception of the malady – it is based on an odd learning compounded of Laurentianism, Marxism, and sophisticated wit. The wit, fortunately, leavens the customary heaviness of the other two elements, but it does not change their natures radically; it is that form of humour which depends on the presence of obvious incongruities and the recognition of these incongruities in turn depends on all the facile dogmas of the day.

While Mr. Auden's humour aids him in his destructive work by supplying the corrosive of laughter (though, to use the kind of language for which he has a justifiable affection, he may soon be laughing out of the other side of his face), it does him a great disservice when he comes to be constructive and affirmative. For his humour just as easily applies to what he champions as what he attacks, and though he ridicules the tones of school- and scoutmasters by using them to make preposterous statements, he cannot avoid these same tones when he essays to make statements which he intends in all seriousness. If Boy Scout optimism is funny in both the capitalist and the

Fascist camps, it is even more funny in the Communist camp, where such bourgeois elements of human nature are said to be eradicated. These are lines which have toughened their sinews with Mr. Eliot's prosodic exercises, and even learned from him to echo an eighteenth-century divine:

> *Where time flows on as chalk stream clear*
> *And lovers by themselves forgiven*
> *The whole dream genuine, the charm mature*
> *Walk in the great and general light*
> *In their delight a part of heaven*
> *Its furniture and choir.*
> *To each his need: from each his power.*

What is more important, however, is that their intellectual flabbiness shows no signs of ever having been in contact with Mr. Eliot's strenuous thinking.

The contrast between the two plays here reviewed is of course very conspicuous. Mr. Auden presents a species of bright journalism: the events of the day, estimated by the thought of the day and recounted in its language. Mr. Eliot turns back eight centuries and tells us of nothing that can be claimed as the exclusive property of our time. In reality, however, this surface contrast is the opposite of the real contrast of the plays. Mr. Auden's timeliness is the timeliness of fashions that change with the seasons, of newspaper headlines that are dead when they are but a few hours old; whereas the insight that probes the constant urges of man's spirit throws a light on the present moment that no record of surface appearances can equal. The eternal is forever timely.

GEOFFREY STONE